

Individual Wellness Plan

Management Guidance

Introduction

This guidance for managers gives information on how to ensure that you have a proactive and effective discussion with staff on supporting them in maintaining their mental health wellbeing.

This also includes documentation to use to enable the conversation, advice on support that's available where working activities have shown as being detrimental to their physical or mental wellbeing.

Agile Working on a continual basis is a new way of working for many staff at the Council. It is therefore important for all staff to consider and identify what they can do to stay well and look after their own health and wellbeing whilst working. It's also essential that staff working remotely feel supported by their manager and have the opportunity for regular communication with 1:1s/catch ups.

Managing staff when they're working remotely means it's harder to identify signs and symptoms of when they are not well and therefore directly asking staff how they are feeling should be a regular topic during conversations. Consider asking how they're feeling more than once as often staff will say they're fine. (See **Conversation Guide** in this document).

Individual Wellness Plan

The Individual Wellness Plan should be used proactively by staff and managers, and you should ensure that staff are aware of this document, where to find it and encourage them to use it and discuss it with you.

This should be actively used and directly where staff have indicated that they are not feeling well, and their wellbeing is being affected.

Following the completion of the IWP and further discussion, it may be appropriate to consider requesting additional support such as, but not limited to:

- Make an occupational health referral
- The individual contacting a Listening Mate or/and the Employee Assistance Programme
- Identified some methods of self-care, e.g. socialising, exercise, etc.
- Contact the Health & Safety team for DSE information

Key Psychological and Emotional Issues

While Most staff will feel able to cope successfully using their own preferred style, individual resources, and social support. Many may be changed in a positive way, experiencing personal development. However, some may experience intrusive thinking about what they 'should' have done differently and shame or guilt about what they have or have not achieved.

Individual difficulties have wider family and social impacts which may have a longer-term effect. Certain staff may be at risk of other

psychological difficulties, including but not limited to burnout, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, or suicidal thoughts.

Suicidal thoughts can be a natural response to when challenges start to feel too much, but help is available. If the person discloses suicidal thoughts encourage them to contact the Samaritans (116 123), speak to their GP, or you can make a management referral to EAP on their behalf, with their consent, or they can contact a local helpline (see 24/7 helpline or out of hours crisis support information on <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mentalhealth>).

If they are in immediate danger of harm call 999. Asking about suicide can feel scary, the Zero Suicide Alliance has produced short videos to help you to start the conversation: <https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training>

Individual Wellbeing Support

Individual wellbeing is the responsibility of the employee themselves, and they should be proactive in considering what they can do to help themselves and what support they can access whether at work or at home. They should use the Individual Wellness Plan (IWP) to do this which also signposts to the WCC support available.

As part of their self-help, you could remind them that they can speak to a [Listening Mate](#).

You should also remind them of the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (EAP) and can also make a referral to the EAP on behalf of the employee (with their permission), and they will then receive a phone call from them directly.

The EAP provides specific management support and a Day 1 Stress Intervention service, once contact has been made, a plan will be created with the employee on how to effectively support and manage the impacts of stress whilst at work. Contact is advised to be made for this service on day 1 of the employee reporting they are suffering from stress or are absent from work with stress, or, as soon as possible.

Please note: Information disclosed must be treated in the strictest confidence, and all information disclosed will comply with the GDPR 2018.

Agreed arrangements must be monitored and reviewed by the manager with regular communication such as 1:1s and/or catch ups to ensure that this is supporting and improving the employee's mental health.

Further advice and support

[Thriving Managers resource](#)

Conversation Guide

Use the **HELP** model below to have an open, honest, and effective conversation.

Have an open and non-judgemental conversation:

- Ask open questions, for example, how are you? what would help you? how does that feel for you?

- Avoid judgemental and patronising responses and questions, for example, you are clearly struggling, what's up? why can't you just get your act together? everyone else is in the same boat and they're okay.
- Remember that two people who are experiencing similar situations may not need the same level of support

Empathise:

- Acknowledge what they are saying, e.g. "that sounds really challenging", "I am sorry you are going through this"
- Ask questions to understand more, e.g. "what has it been like for you?", "how are you feeling about everything?"

Listen actively to hear and understand what they're really saying:

- Allocate enough time
- Identify a suitable time and date
- Avoid interruptions, e.g. put your phone on silent
- Maintain appropriate eye contact (try to look at the camera)
- Be patient and don't rush them

Provide support to the employee in finding ways to keep them well at work:

- Make yourself aware of the support available to employees prior to the meeting
- If someone asks for an adjustment which you are not sure we can provide, explain that you will need to check what support is available and get back to them.
- Seek help: If you are not sure what to do, you should discuss the issue with your HR Advisor. It may be appropriate to refer to Occupational Health.

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