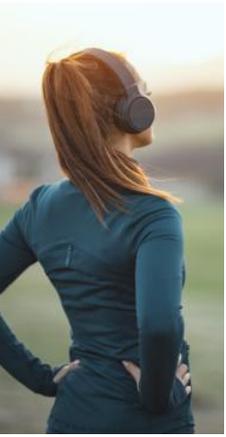
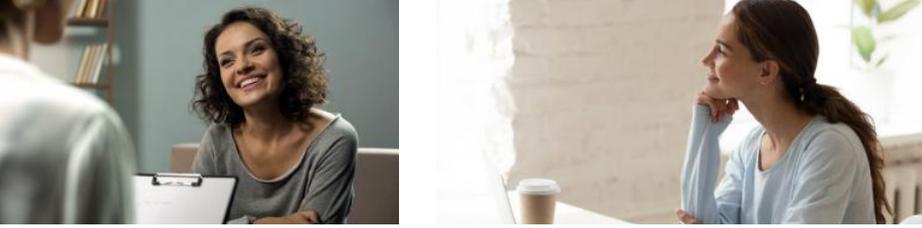




Property Services



Colleague Wellbeing Handbook

Your guide to wellbeing at NHS Property Services



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1. Introduction

At NHS Property Services (NHSPS), we really value the health and wellbeing of our people and our success is based on their expertise, passion and commitment.

We aim to create a great place to work for our people, where they can develop their skills and expertise, and where we support them with their health and mental wellbeing.

As part of our duty of care to look after the health and wellbeing of our colleagues, we have created this handbook to provide information and raise awareness of mental health, to promote our policies that support mental health in the workplace and to equip you with some tips and tools to proactively look after your wellbeing.

We'd like to create a workplace where we are all more aware of our own mental health, where we know how to proactively look after our wellbeing, and where we are well-equipped to have conversations around mental health and support each other. We recognise that there is still work to do here but this is an area we are committed to improving.



2. Our pledge to wellbeing

We understand that there are a diverse range of factors that will affect your health and wellbeing. We will aim to support each individual within the organisation and ensure that we are addressing any workplace factors that may be impacting your sense of wellbeing.

In 2017, the government commissioned a report on mental health at work that outlined some core standards for businesses to implement. We are committed to implementing these standards at NHSPS.



We want to make NHSPS a great place to work and that all starts with looking after our people. We're proud to offer a range of benefits and training in this area but our commitment to creating a healthy happy workplace is ongoing and we look forward to building on this in the future.

Martin Steele
CEO, NHSPS



Colleague wellbeing is a key part of our NHSPS strategy to Get, Grow and Keep the best people. This means every part of wellbeing whether physical or mental health, we want everyone to be able to freely talk about it and be aware that the support mechanisms are in place to help everyone take personal responsibility to look after their health and wellbeing both in and out of work. The wellbeing handbook is a fantastic guide, it's full of great health and wellbeing advice, ideas, exercise and pointers for us all to use – and we want to encourage more people to be engaged in their personal health journey so please share with family and friends.

Hilary Stables
Chief People Officer, NHSPS



The Mental Health Core Standards:



Produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan



Develop mental health awareness among colleagues



Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when colleagues are struggling



Provide colleagues with good working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work-life balance and opportunities for development



Promote effective people management through line managers and supervisors



Routinely monitor colleagues' mental health and wellbeing



Our commitment to wellbeing



Produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan

This handbook is a key component of how we will communicate our mental health at work plan. Across this document, we aim to help you understand: what our approach to mental health at work is, the health and wellbeing benefits available to you and some tips to help you improve your wellbeing.



Develop mental health awareness among colleagues

In 2020, we began a wellbeing webinar series that aimed to help colleagues better look after their wellbeing. Part of this included developing mental health awareness, with several of the webinars focusing on this area. We plan to continue this work by running monthly webinars, including a bi-annual Mental Health Awareness webinar, which will be available to all colleagues and ensure that new starters have access to this information.

Alongside this, we will be creating opportunities for colleagues to become more active through virtual exercise classes and outdoor activities, as our physical fitness feeds directly into our mental fitness and overall wellbeing.



Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when colleagues are struggling

Part of our commitment here involves training our line managers to feel more comfortable and confident in having conversations around mental health and to know what kind of support to offer when colleagues are struggling. This is an area that we, as a society, have not been very accepting of and the stigma surrounding mental illness has made it difficult to have open conversations. But as we advance as a society, NHSPS want to be at the forefront of driving this change: we are committed to ensuring this is a workplace in which open conversations about mental health can be held.

2. Our pledge to wellbeing



Provide colleagues with good working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work-life balance and opportunities for development

The health and safety of our people is paramount to us as an organisation and something we are continually monitoring. We also understand how important it is to maintain a healthy work life balance and this is something we are committed to supporting. As part of this commitment, we train our managers to hold effective one-to-one meetings with their direct reports and to ensure each employee is provided with opportunity for development.

We have introduced a smarter working policy, which brings together our people, workplace and technology to create a great place to work. We describe it as a modern flexible approach to work, creating a culture where we can jointly balance organisational and personal needs. It empowers you to choose the location, how, when and where you work according to your daily activities, adopting a Plug and Play approach. We also still believe the office plays an important role to collaborate, engage with colleagues and meet our customers.

We have developed a toolkit for managing your day, which will be hosted on the intranet and made available to all employees. Its aim is to help you work more effectively and avoid burnout.



Promote effective people management through line managers and supervisors

We are working to train our line managers in mental health awareness to help them feel more confident in offering the right kind of support when it comes to mental health and wellbeing at work. We commit to training at least 70% of our management population by Spring 2021.



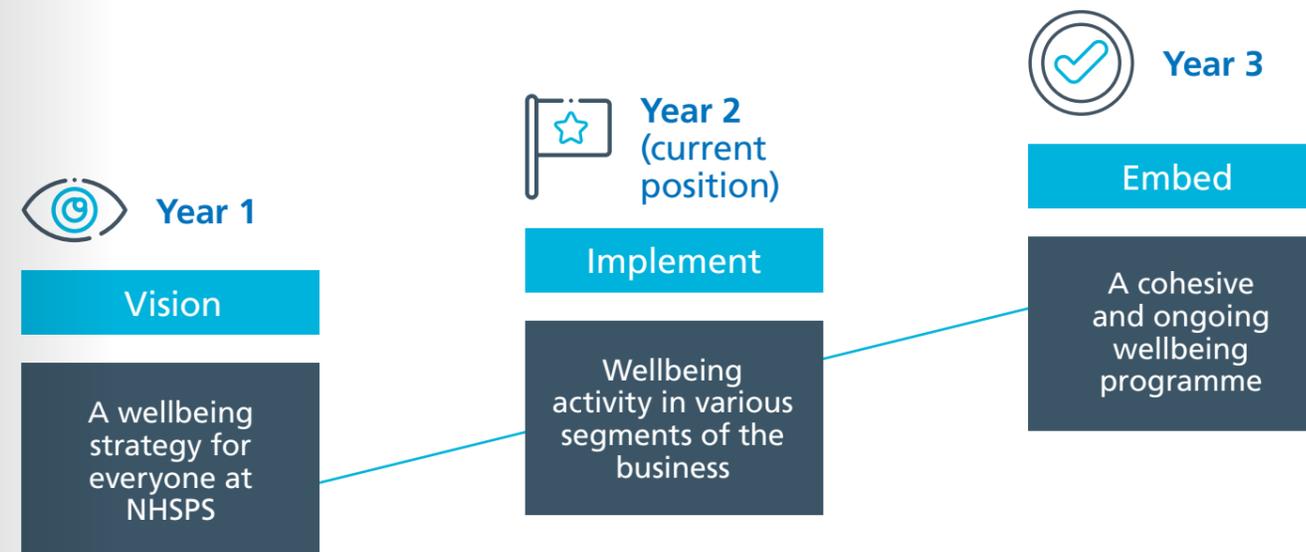
Routinely monitor colleagues' mental health and wellbeing

From time to time, we'd like to ask you about your wellbeing and how you feel we're supporting you with this at work. We will conduct an annual survey to understand your current levels of wellbeing, how you feel we're supporting you with your wellbeing at work and what kind of benefits and support you would like available to you.

In addition to this, we plan to run five focus groups across the year, which will include a cross-section of our working population and will help us further understand the above points.

Finally, we will arrange monthly check-ins with our wellbeing champions to understand any pain points or challenges that are arising in colleagues' wellbeing from their experience.

The vision for our strategy



The three pillars

We will address our colleagues' overall sense of wellness across three distinct pillars of wellbeing as set out in our Strategic Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan, which takes a holistic approach to supporting good health for all. These pillars, and the initiatives under them, are as follows:



Workplace wellness

- Monthly virtual webinars on wellness
- Workplace campaigns to promote good health
- Asbestos and COSHH training
- Smarter Working
- Managing your day toolkit



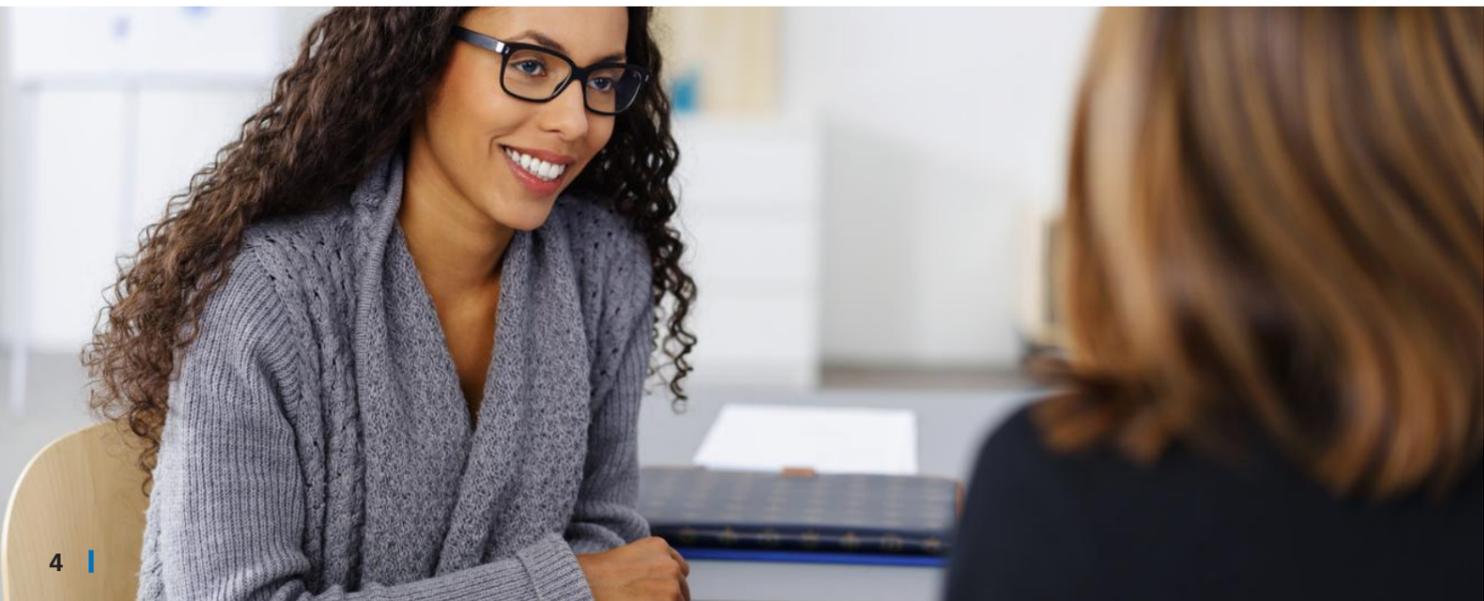
Mental health

- Wellbeing champions
- Management training
- EAP helpline
- 121 counselling
- Mental Health at Work commitment
- Stress management policy



Physical health

- Virtual exercise classes via Teams
- Outdoor activities
- DSE assessments
- PPE audit
- Stoptober
- Healthy eating



3. Tips for looking after your wellbeing

Making wellbeing a priority

We'd like you to make looking after your wellbeing a priority. Whilst we can support you in this endeavour, only you can carry out the daily and weekly activities that will help you stay in great physical and mental health.

Looking after our wellbeing proactively not only means we're likely to stay well and healthy, it also means we'll be more productive at work and home, we're more likely to enjoy our work, and we're less likely to take time off for both mental and physical health conditions.

We hope you will find these tips useful, but it's worth remembering that each individual is unique and different strategies work for different people. We encourage you to find a routine that works for you.



Taking breaks

Various studies on productivity, energy levels and wellbeing have helped us understand the importance of taking breaks throughout our day. When we work for long periods without a break, we become mentally fatigued. The cumulative effect of making thousands upon thousands of decisions throughout the working day catches up with us.



Aim to take one longer break in your day. This will most likely be your lunch break, which is a great opportunity to refuel and refresh.



Try and get some fresh air at least once or twice in your day. A quick walk around the block can be refreshing and energising.



We recommend taking breaks away from screens where possible. We take in a huge amount of information from our devices and this can create information overload, where parts of our brain are forced to over-engage, again creating mental fatigue.



Schedule your breaks in, particularly if you have a busy day or week ahead of you. Adding fifteen-minute breaks to your daily calendar means they are much more likely to happen.

3. Tips for looking after your wellbeing

Creating some boundaries between home and work life

Never before have the lines between our work and home life been so blurred. Many of us are now working from home and, even for those of us who aren't, we have access to our emails and files at all hours of the day thanks to our smart phones, laptops and tablets. This makes it much harder to switch off and often means we need to make a concerted effort to do so.

The lack of rest and recovery from being connected to our work at all hours leaves us feeling mentally fatigued and can contribute to burnout, exhaustion and various mental health conditions.

To combat this, we would recommend creating some boundaries around your working life. Here are some tips to help you to do this:



Try not to check your emails outside of working hours. If you are struggling with this consider switching off your device or keeping it out of sight when you finish your working day.



Try to finish work on time on most days. Of course, there will be times where you may need to work late but try not to make this the norm.



Create a ritual to end the working day with. If you're working from a living space at home, try to pack away your working equipment so you're not tempted to return to it after hours. A nice ritual to include in your day is an after-work walk to signify the end of your working day and to start your leisure time. This will also help with your physical activity levels. You could walk around the block or your local park, which is a great way of clearing your head and winding down from your working day.



Connecting with others

Feeling connected to others is really important for our wellbeing and, as new research has shown, is intrinsically linked to our resilience levels.

Try to make the time to invest in both your personal and professional relationships. Seeing people face to face or hearing their voice is preferable to an email or text, so don't be afraid to pick up the phone, arrange a video call or meet in person where possible.

If you feel isolated or that you don't have a supportive network of friends and family around you, there are ways you can start to make new social connections. You could try attending clubs, classes or community events. You could join a sports team or a local book club for example. Finding people that you share common interests with can be a great way of connecting with others.



3. Tips for looking after your wellbeing

Staying active

Depending on your role at work you may find yourself sitting down for long periods of the day and it is this, our sedentary lifestyles, that have a negative impact on our health.

As humans we were designed to move: our ancestors spent their time hunting and gathering food and travelling long distances to find water and shelter. There is an overwhelming amount of evidence to prove that regular physical exercise can help us stay in positive mental health, so it's a great idea to try and build this into your day.

Make it your aim to move more throughout the day, whatever that looks like. Three things to consider are:



Getting up more frequently from your seat

If you have a desk-based role



Walking more

Increase your step count



Engaging in regular exercise

Running, swimming, cycling, yoga or strength workouts



It could be helpful to set yourself some realistic goals to work towards in terms of movement. For example:

Aiming for **20 minutes** of moderate intensity exercise a day

Aiming to complete **three 30-minute** runs a week

Aiming to take at least **5,000 steps** a day (your smartphone can track this)

Aiming to get up from your seat every **30 minutes**

Prioritising sleep, rest and recovery

Sleep is one of the key pillars of our wellbeing and a basic human requirement. However, it seems harder than ever to consistently get a good night's sleep.

Not sleeping enough can affect our concentration levels, our memory, our mood and our long-term health too. Experts advise that we aim to get seven to nine hours of sleep a night.

Tips to help you get a better nights sleep:



Develop a consistent wind-down routine; this could involve doing something relaxing before bed, like reading something light, practicing a short meditation or listening to relaxing music



Try and keep a consistent sleep schedule; try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every night as the body likes routine



Try to avoid alcohol, caffeine and big meals close to bedtime



Try to switch off from technology an hour before bed and try not to use your phone too much in bed as this can disrupt your sleep

The vicious cycle of not sleeping

It's all too easy to get caught up in the vicious cycle of not sleeping. We start to experience anxious thoughts about sleep, which then releases adrenaline and prevents us from sleeping.



Mindfulness

Mindfulness is great for learning how to disengage from these thought patterns; there are some great apps for this.

You can also practice some simple breathing techniques that can help you relax.

Follow this simple pattern:

- Breathe into the count of four,
- Hold for the count of two,
- Breathe out to the count of four,
- Hold for the count of two,
- Continue.

Useful apps for sleep

- Calm*
- Headspace*
- Sleep stories*
- 'Nothing Much Happens' podcast

*Paid app

3. Tips for looking after your wellbeing

Making time for self-care

So, what is self-care?

Self-care is any action we that we carry out deliberately in order to take care of our physical, mental or emotional wellbeing. It's how we re-energise, refuel and 'refill our cup'. It's the key to living a balanced life and staying in positive mental and physical health, but it needs to be something we actively plan, rather than something that just happens.

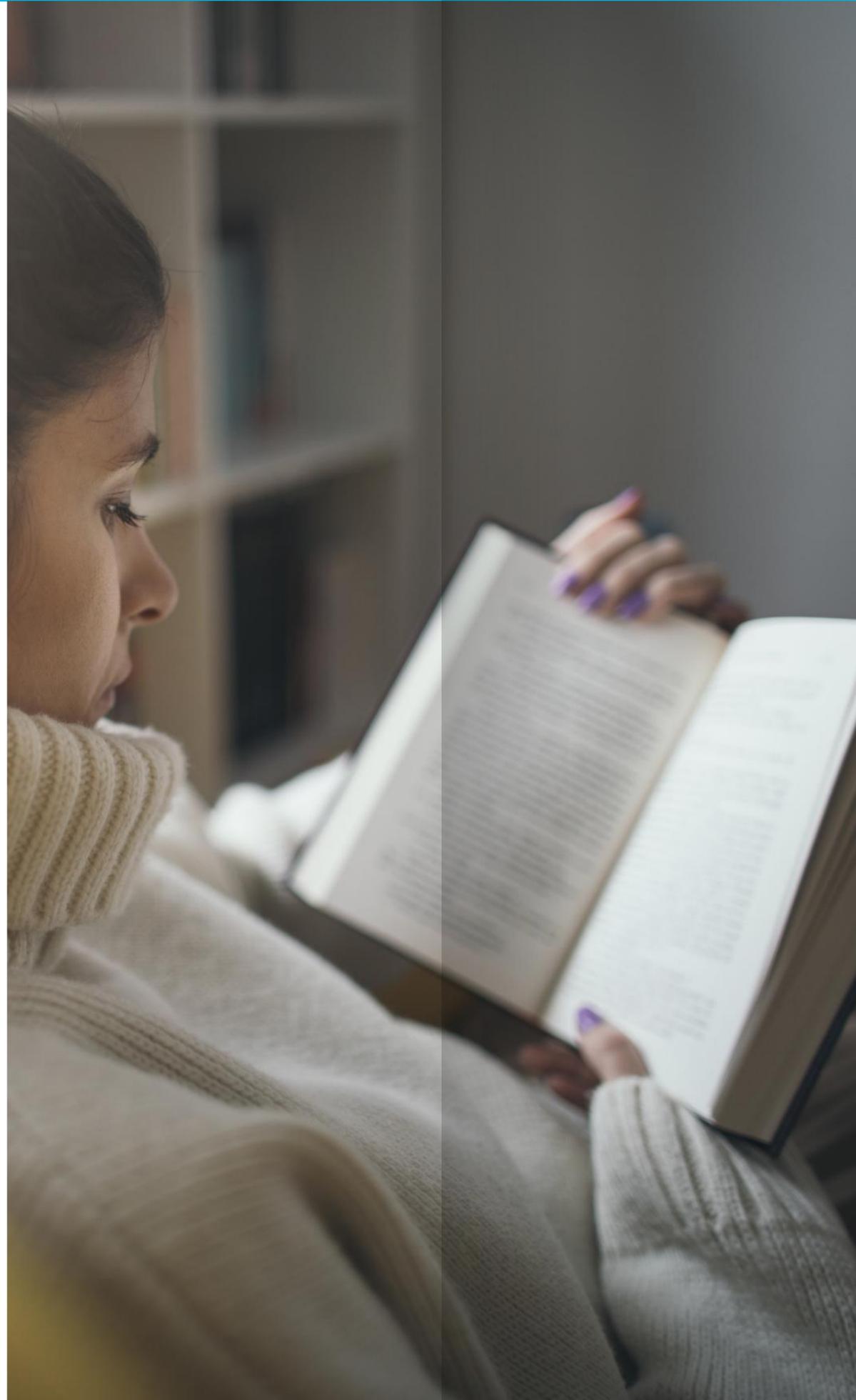
There is no one way to take care of ourselves and different self-care strategies will work for different people, so although we make some suggestions here, it's important to discover what works well for you.

It's helpful to point out here that self-care isn't selfish; when we take the time to look after ourselves, we automatically have more energy, more reserve and more depth to take care of others at home, at work, and in our communities – in other words it can really benefit the people around us too.

It's important to set realistic goals here; for example you may know it's unlikely that you can spend two hours a day baking or an hour in the bath. Perhaps it could be taking a short walk or ten minutes of mindfulness. Remember, something is always better than nothing so if a five-minute walk is all you can manage, it's still worth doing.

These are some self care activities you can try:

- Taking a walk outside
- Taking a relaxing bath
- Meditating or practicing mindfulness
- Practicing yoga and exercising
- Learning something new
- Spending time in nature
- Cooking or baking
- Crafting or creative activities such as painting, knitting or drawing
- Journalling and creating time for reflection
- Giving gratitude; identifying the things we have to be grateful for



Asking for help when you need it

We may all go through times where we struggle with our mental health; please don't be afraid to ask for help. If we know something is wrong, we can work to support you, but we cannot do this if we aren't made aware of the problem.

Whether it's workplace stress or a diagnosed mental health condition, your people team and managers are here to support you. Although we understand it can be daunting talking openly about these experiences, it does mean we can help provide the relevant support for you at work.

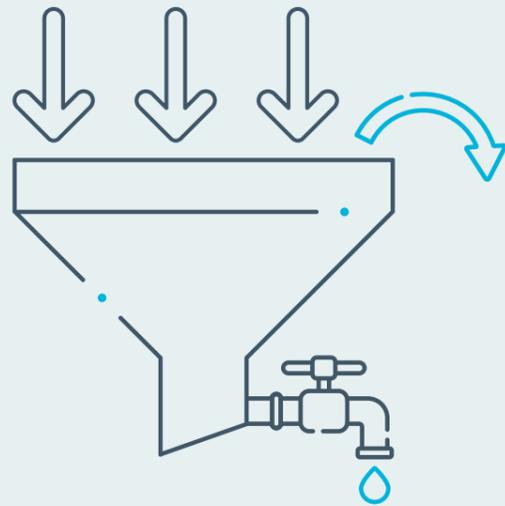
If you feel like your workload is overwhelming or unmanageable, this would be a good time to talk to your line manager. This way, we can address problems as they arise to prevent them from developing into a more serious mental health condition.

4. Managing stress at work

Your stress container

We use the analogy of the stress container to explain how stress can overwhelm us when we don't have effective coping strategies in place. This can eventually lead to experiencing burnout and more serious mental health conditions.

Stress flows into the container



When we use maladaptive coping strategies, this is when the tap can get blocked, causing overflow

If the container overflows, this is when we are vulnerable to overwhelm, burnout and more serious mental illness

The tap should work effectively to let stress out - these are your helpful coping strategies



Symptoms of stress

Stress can manifest itself in many ways, both mentally and physically. You may experience symptoms such as:

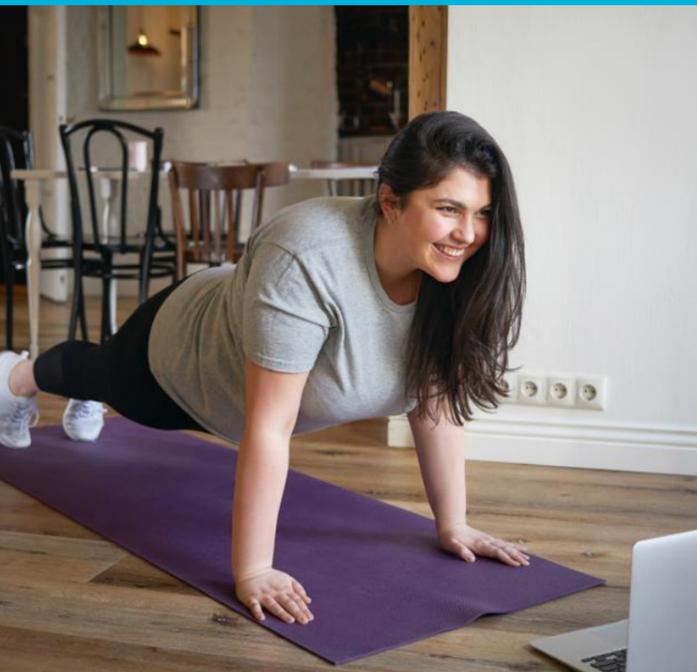
- Tension headaches or migraines
- Low energy
- Heart palpitations
- Tightness in the chest
- Muscle tension
- Digestive issues
- Frequent minor illnesses
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Insomnia or sleep issues
- Changes in mood and behaviour
- Struggling to concentrate
- Changes in body temperature

Dealing with stress

Hopefully, the tips in this handbook have helped you understand how you can create some effective coping strategies, but it is also important to monitor your stress levels to ensure your container is not 'overflowing'. This tends to happen when an individual is experiencing a variety of key stressors in their life; this can be a combination of both work-place pressure and stressors from outside of the workplace.

It is important to access the relevant support when you feel you are approaching burnout, exhaustion or a mental illness. Please see sections six and seven of this handbook for some helpful suggestions here.

5. Health and wellbeing benefits



Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Our EAP is a personal support service where you can access telephone counselling alongside an online health portal with helpful resources to help you with your wellbeing.

The service is completely confidential, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can be accessed via a free phone number. The service is available to employees and immediate family members residing at the same address.

T: 0800 389 0285 (lines open 24/7/365)

Or access via www.healthassuredeap.co.uk using the details below:

Username: Wellbeing
Password: Hub
Enter the code: MetLife – NHS



Wellbeing champions

We are training a number of individuals within the organisation to be Wellbeing Champions. These individuals will be equipped to speak to you about your wellbeing, lend a supportive ear and signpost the relevant services to you. Please note our champions will not be trained counsellors or medical professionals so there is a limit to the support they can offer you. Please speak to the People Team if you feel you require further support with your mental health.



Fitness classes

Our virtual fitness classes are designed to get you moving for the times when you are working from home. Led by a qualified personal trainer, they are fun and energetic classes for all fitness levels and abilities that make it easier for you to exercise from home.



Cycle to work scheme

Our cycle to work scheme enables you to obtain a bike and/or cycling accessories to use for riding to work, with savings on your tax and National Insurance.

- You can choose a bike and equipment worth up to a value of £1,000
- This will then be purchased on your behalf by NHSPS for you to use
- You will then hire the cycle over 12 months via salary sacrifice
- You may have the opportunity to arrange a transfer of ownership at the end of 12 months – you will be contacted at the end by Cycle Solutions to discuss your options with you

To benefit from the scheme, simply select and order a bike and equipment of your choice and register for a deduction to be made direct from your salary (known as a salary sacrifice), which will be used to pay back the loan on the bike. This amount will be deducted from your gross pay (rather than net pay) for the hire period, allowing you to benefit from income tax and National Insurance relief. Typical savings on the scheme can be up to 39% for basic rate tax payers, and 48% for higher rate tax payers.

You can find more information about the cycle to work scheme on the dedicated [NHSPS/Cycle Solutions site](#).



For more information and resources, visit our [Wellbeing at NHSPS page](#).



PS in 10

We run a regular 10-minute podcast – PS in 10 – which provides bite-sized, on-the-go content for our frontline colleagues.

PS in 10 covers a range of lifestyle and work-related topics, including nutrition and eating well on the go; sleeping well for shift workers; managing anxiety and the power of positive thinking. Each podcast is accompanied by a downloadable fact sheet.



Wellbeing webinars

We are currently running monthly, live, wellbeing webinars for all employees at NHSPS. These webinars are designed to provide you with the tools you need to look after your wellbeing more effectively and they cover topics such as nutrition, mindfulness, preventing burnout, mental health awareness, managing anxiety and building resilience.

The recordings of the webinars will be hosted on our company intranet, alongside some useful 'takeaway tips' documents.

Our health and wellbeing partners

Mel Crate | Wellbeing Coach & Facilitator



Mel Crate is a wellbeing coach and the founding director of Luminate, a wellbeing consultancy working with businesses to promote happier and healthier workplaces. Mel founded Luminate after almost a decade of working in high-pressure environments, where work-life balance and mental health were never treated as a priority. She is a trained mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) teacher and a Mental Health First Aider. She has also completed the ASIST suicide prevention training.

Adrian Santos | Personal Trainer



Adrian Santos is the founder of One Body. He helps people gain muscle, drop body fat and increase their mobility. The philosophy behind One Body, is simply that we only have One Body. What we have coming into this world is what we will have when we leave and what we do in between is in our hands. He doesn't believe training is about solely focusing on the physical appearance, but longevity – it's about being able to walk in your 80s and having full independence.

Ross Bewley | Personal Trainer



Ross Bewley is a fitness and nutrition expert and the owner of Gym 72 Personal Training Studio in Manchester City Centre. He is certified personal trainer with over 15 years' experience, and he qualified through the National Academy of Sport Medicine. He is certified at Level 3 with REPS. He has vast experience of working with both individuals and with group training.

6. Programmes to help you



There are a range of resources available outside of the organisation that can also help you if you are struggling with your mental health.

Firstly, if you are experiencing an extreme and persistent low mood, anxiety or other symptoms that could be related to a mental illness, we advise you to see your GP or seek professional medical attention. Your GP should be able to advise on a diagnosis and a recommended treatment plan if you are experiencing mental illness. A diagnosis should only ever be reached by a medical professional (such as your GP or a psychiatrist).

There are a range of other supports you can access which may also be helpful. Here is a list of helpful resources, helplines and services that may be able to help.

Helplines and other resources



CALM is a helpline specifically for individuals who identify as male. It is designed for men who feel down or are experiencing mental illness or suicidal thoughts.

Helpline number: 0800 58 58 58

(Open 7 days a week, from 5pm - midnight)

<https://www.thecalmzone.net>

Hub of Hope

Provided by CHASING THE STIGMA



Hub of Hope is a mental health database listing

mental health services and organisations in your area. Using the location of your web browser or mobile device, the application allows anyone, anywhere, to find the nearest source of support for any mental health issue, from depression and anxiety to PTSD and suicidal thoughts.

<https://hubofhope.co.uk>



Samaritans is a phone helpline offering support to

people experiencing distress or suffering from mental illness or suicidal thoughts.

Helpline number: 116 123

(Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year)

<https://www.samaritans.org>



British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy

This is an online directory of accredited professional counsellors and

psychotherapists in the UK; here, you can find an accredited practitioner if you are looking to seek privately-funded talking therapy.

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-therapy/how-to-find-a-therapist/>



Mind is one of the biggest UK Mental Health charities. They offer an extensive amount of information

on their website around mental health and they run a range of support groups that can be helpful if you are experiencing mental illness.

www.mind.org.uk/information-support



If you're under 35 and struggling with suicidal feelings or you're concerned about a young person

who might be struggling, you can call Papyrus HOPELINEUK.

Helpline number: 0800 068 4141

(Open 10am-10pm weekdays, 2pm-10pm weekends and 2pm-10pm bank holidays)

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org>



Young Minds provide a useful and comprehensive

guide to mental health medication, including information about specific medications and their side effects. This can be helpful if you'd like to find out more about a medication you have been prescribed by a medical professional.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/medications/>



Shout is a text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help.

Text number: 85258

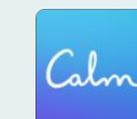
(Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year)

www.giveusashout.org

Wellbeing and mental health apps



Headspace is an app-based meditation subscription service. You can access a range of meditations that can help with stress, sleep, focus, anxiety and wellbeing.



Calm is a mental health and wellbeing app that offers a range of meditations, relaxation exercises and sleep stories to aid your sleep.



Happify uses science-based games and activities to help you overcome the stresses of daily life and increase your happiness levels.



My Possible Self is a mental health app that helps you track your mood and gives you access to activities to help you improve your mental health.



The My Healthy Advantage app – created by our EAP, Health Assured – offers a variety of wellbeing features exclusive to NHSPS. You can access a library of learning materials including wellbeing articles, videos, weekly mood trackers, four-week plans and mini health checks. Available for iOS and Android devices.

You can also access information their online portal at

www.healthassuredeap.com

A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing glasses, a black top, and yellow trousers, is sitting on a windowsill. She is holding an open book and looking at it. The window behind her shows a blurred view of buildings outside.

Thank you for reading our wellbeing handbook!

If you have any feedback or would like to contact the People Team about anything relating to this handbook, please use the details below.



0808 196 1446



[peopleservices@
property.nhs.uk](mailto:peopleservices@property.nhs.uk)