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## Wellness Action Plan





# What is a Wellness Action Plan?



# What is a Wellness Action Plan?

A Wellness Action Plan is a personalised, practical tool we can all use, whether we currently have a mental health problem or not to manage everyday wellbeing. Creating a Wellness Action Plan will allow you to reflect on what keeps you well at work, the symptoms and triggers of ill health, and how to get the support you need to get well and stay well, every day. The Wellness Action Plan is designed to empower you to look after your wellbeing.

It opens a conversation with your manager or supervisor, for them to better understand your needs and experiences and ultimately better support your mental health.

We all have mental health just as we all have physical health, and this Wellness Action Plan has been designed to support us all to manage our mental health.

If you have time away from work, Wellness Action Plans can be used during the return-to-work process, as they provide a structure for conversations around what support will help you and what workplace adjustments might be useful to discuss and consider with your manager.





# Helpful Definitions

Here are some useful definitions to terms used within this guide.



# Helpful Definitions

## Mental health

We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health. How we feel can vary from good mental wellbeing to difficult feelings and emotions, to severe mental health problems.

## Mental wellbeing

Mental wellbeing is the ability to cope with everyday stressors, work productively, interact positively with others and achieve our potential.

## Poor mental health

Poor mental health is when we are struggling with low mood, stress or anxiety. We all go through periods of experiencing poor mental health – mental health is a spectrum of moods and experiences, and we all have times when we feel better or worse.

## Mental health problems

We all have times when we struggle with our mental health. A mental health problem is when difficult experiences or feelings go on for a long time and affect our ability to enjoy and live our lives in the way we want.

## Common mental health problems

These include depression, anxiety, phobias and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). These are the most common conditions that lead to one in four people experiencing a mental health problem in any given year.

## Severe mental health problems

These include conditions like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder which are less common. They can have very varied symptoms and affect your everyday life to different degrees.

## Work-related stress

Work-related stress is an adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them at work. Stress can damage your health and lead to absence.

## Burnout

Burnout is a collection of symptoms. You may feel exhausted, have little motivation for your job, feel irritable or anxious and you may see a dip in your work performance.

## Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

EAPs are a benefit available to employees that support people with personal problems that may impact their wellbeing and performance.





# Using a Wellness Action Plan



# How to create your Wellbeing Action Plan

## **Plan some time in to reflect on your experiences before you fill in your Wellness Action Plan.**

Think about the current pressures you're facing, the impact they're having on your mental health and wellbeing and what you can put in place to deal with these.

**Reflect on your working environment.** Being situated with your colleagues in a workplace can support social connection and aid collaborative activities, but it can present unique challenges. You might wish to reflect on the extent to which you can concentrate on work in a busy or loud environment.

**Think about what support your manager can put in place** to support you and discuss these topics with those in your household if working from home.

## **Where are you working**

Several organisations have been working in new ways with an increased number of employees working remotely. These new ways of working can present new challenges as well as opportunities for improvement. Your Wellness Action should reflect these changes.

## **Sharing with your support network**

A Wellness Action Plan can be a useful self-reflective tool, but if you think it would be helpful, you can share your completed Wellness Action Plan with your manager to support conversations about your wellbeing. You could also share it with colleagues to promote openness and understanding so you can work effectively with each other and offer support.

## **Review your progress**

Check in on your progress every month, so you can keep your plan up to date and based on your reality. You could also share it with colleagues to promote openness and understanding so you can work effectively with each other and offer support.

## **Confidentiality**

You own your Wellness Action Plan. It should only be read and shared with your permission.

If you are filling out a Wellness Action Plan as a result of being unwell, your manager may ask whether you consent for a copy of it to be held with HR, along with any other information about your wellbeing, such as an Occupational Health report or a Return-to-Work plan. It should be up to you whether you are happy for it to be held by HR or kept confidential between yourself and your manager. If in doubt, check your company policy on this.





# Wellness Action Plan Template

A Wellness Action Plan reminds us what we need to do to stay well at work – whether working in person or remotely – and details what we can do to look after our own mental health and wellbeing.

It also helps us develop an awareness of our working style, stress triggers and responses, and enables us to communicate these with our manager and colleagues.





# Using a Wellness Action Plan

## How to get started with a Wellness Action Plan

Plan some time in to fill in your Wellness Action Plan and think about the current pressures you're facing, the impact they're having on your mental health and wellbeing and what you can put in place to deal with these.

Working alongside your colleagues in a workplace can support social connection and aid collaborative activities, but it can present unique challenges. You might wish to reflect on the extent to which you can concentrate on work in a busy or loud environment. It's useful to think about what support your manager can put in place to support you and discuss these topics with those in your household if working from home.

Once you've completed your Wellness Action Plan, it's helpful to review it monthly. This can help you log any learning or helpful practices from the previous month. It's also beneficial to understanding your triggers and to make sure you're adapting to any changes in your work arrangements. Things can change daily so it's important to keep on top of identifying what keeps you well and check the things you've put in place are working.

## Ways of working

Many organisations have been working in new ways with an increased number of employees working remotely. These new ways of working can present new challenges as well as opportunities for improvement. You may find it useful to update your Wellness Action Plan to reflect these changes.

## Sharing your Wellness Action Plan

A Wellness Action Plan can be a useful self-reflective tool, but if you think it would be helpful, you can share your completed Wellness Action Plan with your manager to support conversations about your wellbeing.

Your manager can help identify when you may be becoming unwell or help you put things in place to help you stay well. You could also share it with colleagues to promote openness and understanding so you can work effectively with each other and offer support.

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# Wellness Action Plan template



## Reflect on how you work

**What are your current and intended working arrangements?**

You might wish to highlight any flexibility you've agreed with your manager, for example working hours.

**Are there any characteristics of your individual working style that you'd like to make your manager or colleagues aware of?**

For example, a preference for face-to-face conversations or digital communications when being allocated work including negotiation on deadlines before they are set.

# Wellness Action Plan template



## Staying mentally healthy at work

**What helps you stay mentally healthy at work?**

For example, taking an adequate lunch break away from your workspace, getting some exercise before or after work or in your lunch break, natural light at your workspace.

**Are there any situations or behaviours that can trigger poor mental health for you whilst working?**

For example, conflict at work, tight deadlines.

**What can you, your manager or colleagues put in place to proactively support you to stay mentally healthy at work and minimise these triggers?**

For example, regular feedback and catch-ups, flexible working patterns, explaining wider organisational developments.



# Wellness Action Plan template



## Experiencing poor mental health at work

**How might experiencing poor mental health impact on your work?**

For example, you may find it difficult to make decisions, struggle to prioritise work tasks, difficulty with concentration, drowsiness, confusion, headaches.

**Are there any early warning signs that might be noticed by your manager or colleagues when you are starting to experience poor mental health?**

# Wellness Action Plan template



## Experiencing poor mental health at work

**What actions would you like to be taken if any of these early warning signs of poor mental health are noticed by your manager or colleagues?**

For example, talk to you discreetly about it, contact someone that you have asked to be contacted.

**Is there anything additional you would like to share that would support your mental health at work?**



# Top tips for staying well at work





# Top tips for staying well at work

## Identify your triggers

What affects someone else's mental wellbeing won't necessarily affect yours in the same way. Whether it's challenges in work or the current circumstance we all find ourselves in, we all have times where we feel stressed or upset. Working out what triggers poor mental health for you can help you anticipate problems and find solutions.

## Take time for yourself

Spending time on yourself is essential for your wellbeing, and helps you be more resilient. Ignoring your needs can lead to stress and burn-out. Take short breaks throughout the day as well as at least half-an-hour to get some food. A short break can help you feel recharged, refreshed, and can also give you a different perspective on any work problems.

## Get the basics right

Quality sleep, a good diet and proper hydration can make all the difference to your workday. Be sure to keep yourself well hydrated throughout the day and prioritise getting a good sleep.

## Connect with colleagues

Evidence suggests that feeling close to and valued by other people is a basic human need. Good relationships are important to our wellbeing. Striking up conversations with colleagues can also be great ways to build professional relationships.

## Celebrate the small successes

We all want to contribute and make a difference to the things we work on. So, it's important to celebrate the successes, big and small. Try to identify one small thing each day that you can accomplish.

## Set boundaries

It can feel easy to bring work home, especially if you've had experience of working remotely. Consider how you communicate clear boundaries with colleagues through making clear your working hours using your diary.

## Ask for help

If you feel your workload is spiralling out of control, take the opportunity to discuss it with your manager or supervisor. Discuss what work you should prioritise and reflect on what is possible to negotiate in terms of timelines and deadlines as well as the scope or scale of the work to be completed.

## Learn to say no

It can be easy to take on more work than you can manage, but over time this can lead to stress and burnout. Try to protect your mental health by politely saying no to extra demands when you've not got capacity. If you feel unable to decline additional work, be sure to clarify with your manager what existing work should be deprioritised to accommodate it within your workday.



# Top tips for staying well at work

## Keep active

Whilst working remotely, we're more likely than when working in a workplace to be more sedentary – spending a greater amount of time sat at our desks, taking fewer breaks and moving around less. Consider planning a short walk as part of your morning routine before work or taking a walk over your lunch break.

## Touch base with your manager

It can be easy to feel isolated from the rest of your team whilst working remotely. This feeling may worsen if other colleagues begin to return to the workplace or begin hybrid working. Make sure to schedule regular check-ins with your manager, whether it's weekly or daily, to have a general catch up on your wellbeing, discuss team or department updates, work priorities and horizon scanning. These regular catch ups can ensure you feel apprised of everything that is going on and how your work fits with that of the rest of the team.

## Familiarise yourself with the support available

If your organisation is going through a period of adapting its working practices in response to new ways of working, not all support may yet be available remotely. Familiarise yourself with the sources of support available to you. This may include phone or web-portal access to an employee assistance programme (EAP), virtual reflective practice appointments, virtual drop-in sessions with internal HR or Occupational Health teams. If you're unsure, check with your manager what support is available and how you can access it.



