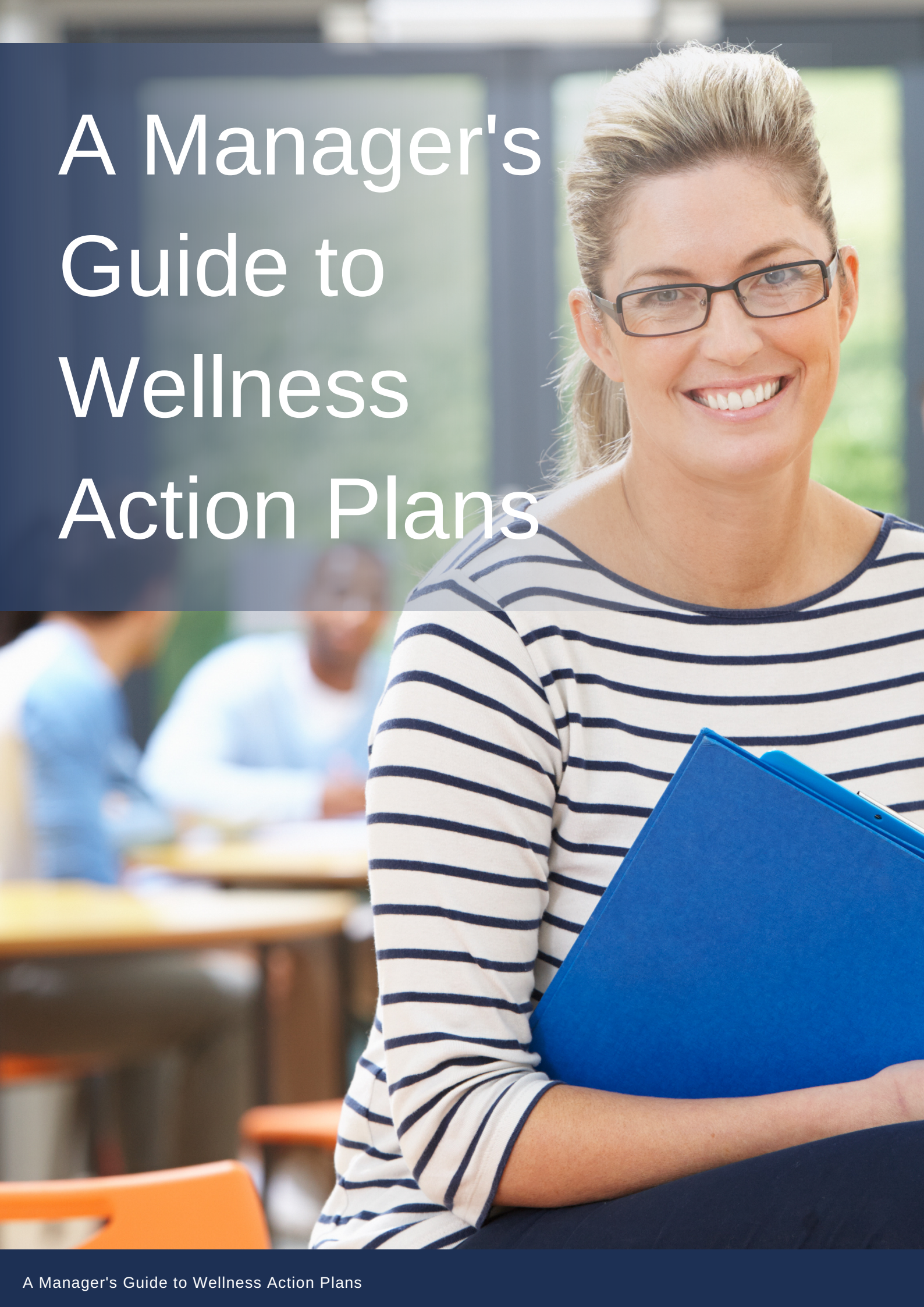


A Manager's Guide to Wellness Action Plans

A smiling woman with blonde hair pulled back, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a white long-sleeved shirt with dark blue horizontal stripes. She is holding a large blue folder or binder. She is seated at a wooden table in a bright, modern office or classroom setting. In the background, other people are seated at tables, and large windows let in natural light.

Introduction

This guide will help you to support your team members with their mental and physical health and wellbeing at work. You are required to work with all of your direct reports to fill in and regularly review a Wellness Action Plan (WAP).

As a manager, supporting your team to draw up a WAP gives them ownership of the practical steps needed to help them stay well at work. It also opens up a dialogue between you and your team member, to help you better understand their needs and experiences and therefore better support their wellbeing. This can improve productivity and performance as well as improving job satisfaction.

What should the WAP Cover?

- Approaches the individual can adopt to support their mental wellbeing
- Actions and positive steps you will both take if they are experiencing stress or poor wellbeing
- Potential impact of poor health and wellbeing on performance, if any what Support they need from you as their manager
- Early warning signs of poor mental health to look out for any workplace triggers for poor mental health or stress
- Anything else that they feel would be useful in supporting their mental or physical health
- An agreed time to review the WAP and any support measures which are in place

The WAP is not legally binding, but is intended as an agreement between you and your team member in order to promote their wellbeing or address any existing mental health needs, including any adjustments they may wish to discuss.

Supporting your team members to complete their WAP

As a manager, you will be a key support in encouraging your team members to develop their WAP. You could start by:

- Giving your team member a copy of the Wellness Action Plan (WAP)
- Asking your team member to have a go at completing the WAP
- Scheduling time to discuss and finalise their WAP with you

When completing the WAP they should consider:

- What they are like when they are feeling well and flourishing at work
- What a work environment that promotes good wellbeing looks like for them
- What helps maintain their wellbeing
- What coping strategies they already use for dealing with poor mental or physical health and why these have been effective
- How they've addressed similar challenges in the past
- What hasn't worked for them in the past and why they think that was

Have in mind that:

- We are often the experts on our own mental and physical health and wellbeing and the support or adjustments we may need. The WAP provides the space and structure to consider this.
- The WAP needs to include all the things that are important to the individual's wellbeing, from their triggers and signs of poor mental health, to what action to take and what support they need when or if they become unwell.

Once the WAP has been drawn up, you will need to factor in some time during your catch-ups or 1-to-1's to review the WAP. The WAP is most effective when treated as a live, flexible document, so a regular 'feedback loop' with your team member is an important part of the process. The WAP should be owned by the individual, expressing their personal choices, their personal experiences and their needs. Your role as manager is to discuss their plan with them and provide support, including guidance on what is possible for any reasonable adjustments. Try to avoid influencing them by offering your own advice or suggestions.

Reasonable Adjustments and The Equality Act 2010

A reasonable adjustment is an alteration that an employer makes which enables an employee to continue with their duties without being at a disadvantage compared to others. Under the Equality Act 2010, there is a legal duty on employers to make these reasonable adjustments for employees with a disability. Regardless of whether a team member is regarded as a disability we encourage you to make reasonable adjustments for staff to support their wellbeing. As a result of completing a WAP, you might decide to make reasonable adjustments such as:

Support from you as a manager

- providing written instructions if requested
- providing workload support and help with prioritising work
- agreeing the type of work for a phased return to work
- increasing frequency of 1-to-1's

Changes to the work environment

- arranging for someone who finds the distractions of an open-plan office detracts from their work performance to have a desk in a quieter area
- moving a person's workstation
- provide a quiet space for breaks
- allow for increased personal space

Other types of support

- arranging mediation if there are difficulties between colleagues
- appointing a 'buddy' or 'mentor' outside the usual management structure who can support someone on a peer to peer basis

Flexibility with working patterns

- flexible or home working hours
- allowing someone to take time out of the office if needed
- enabling part-time working or job-share arrangements
- enabling someone to arrange their annual leave so that they have regularly spaced breaks
- allowing someone who finds large meetings very difficult to have breaks between meetings
- a gradual return to work after periods of absence
- reduction in hours or relief from some responsibilities if necessary
- allowing someone who is starting or reducing medication to have a day off if they are experiencing side effects
- enabling a person to arrange their hours to permit them to attend therapy

Confidentiality

The contents of the WAP are confidential between you and your team member with a copy kept on their personnel file only accessible by the Head of Service. This is explained to them in the WAP. In order to fulfil your duty of care to keep your staff members safe at work, you will be obliged to break confidentiality if they are experiencing a crisis. If you become aware that someone is at serious risk of harm, whether this is the employee or someone else, you should call the emergency services.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing

The WAP can help identify how an individual's wellbeing can be proactively supported, maintained and improved through their actions and our support. Your managerial style is an important part of that support.

How people are treated and managed on a day-to-day basis is central to their wellbeing and to how motivated and engaged they feel, so it is important to reflect on your managerial style and tailor it to suit the needs of each team member and task.

Your role and behaviour as a manager is key to the wellbeing of your team members. Being open to receiving feedback on your management and communication style and being aware of how you come across to others is a crucial part of being an effective manager, and creating healthy and productive teams.

- Proactively ask your staff what support they need.
- Develop trust by regularly asking for feedback about the your support.
- Weave wellbeing into your catch-ups with staff, ensuring that you regularly ask how they are and how well they feel their work is going.
- Encourage positive relationships with colleagues and provide mediation where necessary.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing...Continued

- Be supportive, approachable and responsive, ensuring that you are available for regular work-related conversations and increasing the frequency of supervision or catch-up time with the team member if required.
- Proactively support staff to monitor their workload and encourage healthy working hours and a positive work/life balance.
- Provide your team with meaningful work and opportunities for personal development and growth.
- Make sure that deadlines are reasonable, that work is clearly defined and well matched to each employee's abilities and that people understand their role in the bigger picture.

Continued Improvement

As part of our commitment to supporting the total wellbeing of our staff we will:

- Welcome your feedback on the WAP documents and process.
- Share positive case studies and best practice from time to time to aid you in delivering excellent support for your teams wellbeing.
- Remain committed to exploring and extending the range of reasonable adjustments which we are able to offer staff.
- Continue to improve and enhance our overall staff benefits package.
- Seek additional offers for staff that promote good wellbeing.

If you'd like to provide feedback on the WAPs or have ideas for anything that can improve staff wellbeing, please contact support@ipsgrow.org.uk

