

Your Wellness Action Plan (WAP)



Introduction

The way we view workplace wellbeing is changing. Our focus is shifting from reactive management of sickness absence to a more proactive approach of prevention through promoting wellbeing and improving employee engagement.

To support staff wellbeing, we have developed this Wellness Action Plan (WAP), a tool which helps all employees manage their mental and physical health and wellbeing at work. We believe that this will enable us to implement a comprehensive approach to helping staff to manage their health and wellbeing. This will include how to promote staff wellbeing and tackle the causes of work-related mental and physical health problems as well as supporting staff that are experiencing problems.

Who is the WAP for? The WAP is designed for anyone in employment or a voluntary role, to support and promote their mental and physical health and wellbeing at work satisfaction.

You might be:

- currently well and using the WAP as a proactive tool to map out what needs to be in place for you to remain mentally and physically well at work
- currently well and using the WAP to support your general wellbeing at work
- currently experiencing a mental health problem and want to find out how a WAP can help you
- currently experiencing a physical health problem and want to find out how a WAP can help you

Some helpful definitions

Mental health

We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health, and how we feel can vary considerably from day to day and over time.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is the ability to cope with the day to day stresses of life, work productively, interact positively with others and realise our own potential.

Work-related stress and ill health

The most common types of work places illness are mental health problems and musculoskeletal disorders.

Work-related stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them at work. Stress, including work-related stress, can be a significant cause of illness and is known to be linked with high levels of sickness absence, staff turnover and other issues such as increased capacity for error.

Stress is not a medical diagnosis, but severe stress that continues for a long time may lead to a diagnosis of depression or anxiety, or more severe mental health problems.

Our hope is that use of this WAP will enable you to promote a good work life balance and mitigate unnecessary or undue stress at work.

What is a Wellness Action Plan (WAP) and how can it help me?

As a leading mental health charity we seek to be proactive and innovative in our approach to managing mental health and wellbeing at work. This WAP is inspired by Mary Ellen Copeland's Wellness Recovery Action Plan® (WRAP®): an evidence-based system used worldwide by people to manage their mental health.

The WAPs are a personalised, practical tool we can all use – whether we have a mental health problem or not – to help us identify what keeps us well at work, what causes us to become unwell, and how to address a mental health problem at work should you be experiencing one.

It also opens up a dialogue with your manager or supervisor, in order for them to better understand your needs and experiences and ultimately better support your mental health, which in turn leads to greater productivity, better performance and increased job satisfaction. We all have mental and physical health needs, and this WAP has been designed to support us all to manage our health and wellbeing.

With a large number of dispersed workers, many of whom work remotely in settings beyond direct control, a WAP can help identify how to support staff health and wellbeing especially in these settings. We hope that the WAP can help identify and overcome the barriers which this style of working can present.

WAPs are also particularly helpful during the return to work process if you have been off work for any extended period, as they provide a structure for conversations around what support will help you and what reasonable adjustments might be useful to discuss and consider with your manager.

What should your WAP cover?

- Approaches you will take and behaviours you can adopt to support your wellbeing.
- Any workplace triggers for stress or poor wellbeing.
- Actions and positive steps you and your manager will take if you are experiencing stress or poor mental health.
- What support you might need from your line manager to ensure good wellbeing.
- An agreed time to review the WAP and any support measures that have been put in place to see if they're working.
- Anything else that you feel would be useful in supporting your mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- Early warning signs of poor mental health that your manager or supervisor can look out for.

Your WAP is not legally binding, but is intended as an agreement between you and your manager in order to promote your wellbeing including any adjustments you may wish to discuss.

How to get started with your WAP

- You might like to plan some time on your own to fill in your WAP or work through it initially with your manager. It's up to you which you prefer.
- Your manager will be in touch to schedule some confidential time to discuss the WAP together.
- Consider what it would be helpful for your manager to know before the meeting.

By completing a WAP, you will be able to plan in advance by gaining an awareness of what works and what doesn't work for you in terms of managing your wellbeing, what support you require from your manager and developing behaviours that support your health.

In the event that you do experience stresses or poor wellbeing we hope that this action plan will mean we have a better idea of the tailored support you need. It also facilitates an open dialogue with your manager – leading to practical, agreed steps which can form the basis for regularly monitoring and reviewing your wellbeing.

By regularly reviewing your WAP, you can adapt it to reflect changes in your experiences or new approaches you find helpful, and by being proactive and taking ownership of the process and of the WAP itself, it may help you feel more in control.

The WAP should be written and owned by you, expressing your own personal choices, reflecting your voice, your personal experience and your needs. Your manager's role is to discuss the plan with you and provide support, including guidance on what is possible for any reasonable adjustments. It should be a collaborative process, but led by you.

Confidentiality: Your WAP will be held confidentially by your manager with a copy to be kept in your personal file which is accessible only by your manager and the Head of Operations.

In general your manager will only reveal anything from your WAP in order to facilitate making any reasonable adjustments you require and only with your consent. The content will not be shared with any other colleagues.

You are welcome to seek advice from the health professional involved in your care, such as a GP or Occupational Health expert, on what you might wish to include in your WAP.

In order for us to fulfill our duty of care to keep staff safe at work, we will be obliged to break confidentiality if we believe you are experiencing a crisis. If we become aware that you or someone else is at serious risk of harm, we may decide to call the emergency services.

Reasonable adjustments and the Equality Act 2010

As a result of completing a WAP, you might discuss with your manager whether any reasonable adjustments are needed.

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.

Top tips for staying well at work

Taking positive actions, however small, can improve your life at work and help prevent stress developing in the first place. You may be free to do some things without reference to anyone else, but some things you will need to negotiate, formally or informally, with colleagues or managers.

- Develop good relationships with colleagues so you can build up a network of support.
- Talk to someone you trust, at work or outside, about what upsets you or makes you feel stressed.
- If you need help, say so.
- Be assertive, say no if you can't take on extra demands.
- Be realistic, you don't have to be perfect all the time.
- If everything starts to feel overwhelming, take a deep breath. Try and get away from your desk or situation for a few minutes.
- Write a list of what needs to be done; it only takes a few minutes and can help you to prioritise, focus and get things in perspective. It can also feel satisfying to tick items off once they have been done.
- Try and take a walk or get some fresh air during the day. Exercise and daylight are good for your mental and physical health.
- Work regular hours and try to take the breaks and holidays you're entitled to. If things are getting too much, book a day off or a long weekend.

[Download Your Wellness Action Plan Here](#)

