

Guidance Notes - For the Employee

When completing the Wellness Action Plan, take your time to think about your health and your own specific needs. Consider your lifestyle as well as your job role, and what you need to do personally to remain well, as well as the support you are looking for at work.

Relaxation techniques are proven to have significant health benefits and you may wish to consider incorporating those into your daily routines such as:

- ◆ Deep breathing exercises
- ◆ Mindfulness or meditation
- ◆ Yoga

You may wish to ask yourself what physical activity you need to undertake to keep well but in the case of physical health issues, not run the risk of exacerbating the issue. Examples include:

- ◆ Walking each morning for at least 30 minutes and no more than 45 minutes
- ◆ Cycling or swimming twice a week
- ◆ Pilates for stretching

When considering specific work-related triggers, spend time to understand those carefully and discuss them with your line manager. Spend time also thinking about what reasonable actions you feel would mitigate these triggers, considering the needs of both parties. This information will help your manager consider adjustments where possible. Potential factors and mitigating actions could be:

- ◆ Conflict at work → timely intervention
- ◆ Organisational change → additional 1:1 time with your line manager
- ◆ Being excluded from decision making → being invited to a particular meeting
- ◆ Specific task struggles such as heavy lifting, attention to detail with the written word or numbers → assessed individually and/or referral to occupational health

What are the warning signs your manager should look out for when you are starting to feel unwell?

For example:

- ◆ Withdrawing from colleagues
- ◆ Changes in behaviour, such as increased irritability
- ◆ Reduced performance
- ◆ Frequent sickness absences

What actions would *you* commit to if you start to feel unwell? For example:

- ◆ Discuss it with line manager
- ◆ Take a full lunch break, go for a short walk or take a rest
- ◆ Engage with colleagues and the wider organisation
- ◆ Revisit the personal actions in the Wellness Action Plan

Finally, you may want to consider the benefits of discussing your individual working style with your line manager. For example, do you prefer email or more face to face contact or perhaps you would benefit from a quiet space on occasion to help focus on a project. You may prefer to work with a written plan of work or to meet regularly to review and reset priorities. Having open and honest conversations with your line manager will help to facilitate a productive working relationship to support your health.

Guidance Notes - For the Line Manager

When completing the Wellness Action Plan with your employee, a good starting point would be to read through the guidance notes aimed at the employee in order to provide helpful background information to the process. Completing this Plan needs to be a collaborative process, whereby both employer and employee understand each other's requirements and perspectives with the aim of creating a Plan that supports the employee's health and therefore performance at work.

In order to pick up on any early signs of struggles or concern, the essential starting point is to understand their usual behaviours when they are well and happy at work. Once you are aware of their normal behaviour you are better placed to spot any changes which may indicate depleted health. You may wish to look at:

- ❖ Engagement in meetings - is the camera usually on or off, are they quiet or chatty and where appropriate, do they usually travel to meetings or dial-in remotely?
- ❖ Interaction with colleagues - do they interact frequently and widely or are they more reserved?
- ❖ Email communication - perhaps the tone and style of their emails has changed.

As you can see from the employee guidance notes above, the employee is asked to consider a number of things in preparation for this Plan, including how they can support their own health, any early warning signs of poor health that you as the manager are to look out for and what might trigger poor health at work.

From the employer perspective, in preparation for the meeting you may wish to consider:

- ❖ What the wider wellbeing support options are.
- ❖ What adjustments have or haven't worked in the past.
- ❖ What adjustments you would not be able to consider due to the specific needs of the organisation.

The most common actions you may need to consider include:

- ❖ Regular feedback and supervision
- ❖ Discussion of wider developments in the organisation
- ❖ Flexible working patterns
- ❖ Temporarily reduced workload to support recovery
- ❖ Guidance on prioritising workload
- ❖ Additional 1:1 meetings

Finally, discussions around health and wellness can be uncomfortable and difficult for both parties. Ensuring that the Wellness Action Plan is reviewed regularly in 1:1 meetings can help to 'normalise' the conversation in the future.