

Health and wellbeing



We are
safe and
healthy

While the importance of supporting our NHS colleagues has long been recognised, the COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on the importance of people looking after their physical and mental wellbeing. Now more than ever, supporting health and wellbeing should not be just a 'nice to do' and should be integral to your organisation's retention strategy.

Enhancing the experience of our staff, and helping people to stay well, means that our highly valued NHS workforce will stay at work for longer. Health and wellbeing is an organisational responsibility and taking a collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach will maximise the reach and success of your approach. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to supporting workforce wellbeing. It is important to listen to your staff and understand their specific needs as they emerge and change.

Taking a strategic and flexible approach will enable you to develop and implement a comprehensive and robust health and wellbeing support offer that will enable retention of staff in the longer term.

See NHS England and NHS Improvement's web page for information on the 2021 edition of the NHS Health and Wellbeing Framework to support

health and wellbeing web pages also have a variety of supportive materials around wellbeing.

Top tips

- ✓ Review your health and wellbeing strategy so that it aligns with and drives your overall retention plan.
- ✓ Get the basics of health and wellbeing right and ensure that staff have access to suitable rest spaces, are able to take regular breaks and have access to appropriate toilet, changing facilities and water.
- ✓ The health and wellbeing agenda needs to be championed from the top. Introducing wellbeing guardians will help your organisation to question and challenge decisions that may impact the health and wellbeing of staff. Download NHS Employers' digital resources which share how to effectively gain buy-in from senior leaders to support your health and wellbeing strategy.
- ✓ Provide line managers with the skills, guidance, and training so that they understand their role in supporting staff health and wellbeing, can effectively lead their teams compassionately, and can signpost their staff to the appropriate support. See NHS Employers' health and wellbeing top tips for supporting line managers.
- ✓ Build health and wellbeing into everyday conversations by fostering a culture that promotes and enables regular open discussions about wellbeing in the workplace.
- ✓ Ensure your health and wellbeing activities meet the needs of all staff including those with disabilities, those from BME or LGTBQ+ communities or who may identify with other protected characteristics. For guidance on how you can make reasonable adjustments to support disabled staff in their roles, visit the Workforce Disability Equality Standard. For information on creating equal access to career opportunities and fair treatment in the workplace, visit the Workforce Race Equality Standard web pages.
- ✓ Use health and wellbeing champions and advocates in your organisation to spread key health and wellbeing messages.

- ✓ Develop a robust communications strategy to effectively promote your wellbeing support offer to all staff, cascading across several channels to target hard to reach staff.
- ✓ Download free health and wellbeing templates to help promote your wellbeing offer within your organisation.
- ✓ Use the NHS Health and Wellbeing Framework and complete the diagnostic tool to understand key enablers to wellbeing and find more information about the interventions you can make.
- ✓ Link with trade union representatives within the trust to ensure staff and management views are included when implementing health and wellbeing initiatives.

Making this happen

Leaders can:

- Lead the way in setting and cultivating a culture that promotes open discussion of health and wellbeing at work.
- Empower and enable managers to prioritise wellbeing by incorporating health and wellbeing into leadership training as part of staff development.
- Engage with your Wellbeing Guardian to ensure workforce wellbeing is at the forefront of your organisation's strategic priorities at board level.

Managers can:

- Have regular supportive wellbeing conversations with their staff and ensure that there is a focus on health and wellbeing in team meetings to encourage peer support.
- Signpost staff to the health and wellbeing support they need.
- Undertake training so they have the skills and tools needed to effectively support the wellbeing of their team.

Case studies

initiative, and did so through a project undertaken by one of their chief nurse clinical fellows. In February 2020, a survey was sent out to all staff via the trust's weekly communications bulletin to identify the greatest barriers to staff rest, hydration and nutrition. Read the full case study.

- North Bristol NHS Foundation Trust made a bold statement to their colleagues that 'your health is as important as our patients'. The organisation created a comprehensive wellbeing programme based around the NHS Employers Health and Wellbeing Framework. After a year, this had a real impact on staff reducing their sickness by 3,923 days saving the organisation £301,015 a year in sickness costs. The trust also introduced 100 wellbeing champions and focused their support on developing good psychological wellbeing practice for managers and within teams. Read the full case study.

Tools and further reading

- Keep up to date with interventions and practical solutions on NHS England and NHS Improvement's website.
- How are you feeling NHS? toolkit.
- Evaluating your health and wellbeing programme.
- NHS England » Looking after your team.
- NHS England » Looking after you too.