Wellness Action Plans: a guide for staff

The way employers view workplace wellbeing is changing: the focus is shifting from reactive management of sickness absence to a more proactive approach of prevention through promoting wellbeing and enhancing employee engagement.

We are looking for new ways to address and support staff wellbeing and this has led us to introduce the Wellness Action Plan Tool (WAP).

Based on a framework developed by the mental health charity MIND, the WAP is designed to help you manage your mental health and wellbeing at work.
**What is a Wellness Action Plan (WAP)?**

The WAP is inspired by an evidence-based system used worldwide by people to manage their mental health. It is a personal, practical tool that anyone can use, whether you have a mental health problem or not, that helps you identify what keeps you well at work, what causes you to become unwell and how to address a mental health problem at work should you experience one. The WAP is not legally binding but is intended to allow your manager or supervisor to agree with you how you can be practically supported in the workplace and how to address any mental health needs.

**Who should complete a WAP?**

Any member of staff can complete a WAP. You may be:
- Currently experiencing a mental health problem
- Currently well but interested in using a WAP as a proactive tool to map out what might need to be in place for you to be mentally well at work

**What should a WAP cover?**

- Approaches you can take and behaviours you can adopt to support your mental wellbeing
- Early warning signs of poor mental health that your manager or supervisor can look out for and respond to effectively
- Any workplace triggers for poor mental health or stress
- Support you might need
- Actions or steps you or your manager might be able to take if you are experiencing stress or poor mental health

**How can it help me?**

The WAP helps to open a dialogue with an appropriate manager or supervisor so they can better understand your needs and experiences, potentially leading to better support for you in the workplace. This in turn leads to better productivity, performance and job satisfaction.

**When should I complete a WAP?**

A WAP can be completed at any time – they are not mandatory but an option that is open to you as a way for you to develop a structured way of maintaining your mental health at work. They can be particularly helpful during any period of absence or a phased return-to-work process if you have been off work due to a mental health problem, as they provide a framework for conversations about what might support you and help you to stay well.

It should be drafted by you and then discussed and agreed with your manager or supervisor.

**Is it confidential?**

The WAP should be held confidentially and regularly reviewed by you and your manager/ supervisor together. You need only provide information that relates to your role and the workplace, and that you are comfortable sharing.