

## Wellbeing session notes

Without staff that are well and at work, the NHS could not deliver quality and effective care to patients. 'Wellbeing' is a broad concept and is described as relating to the following areas in particular:

- Mental
- Spiritual
- Belonging
- Financial
- Physical
- Diverse and Inclusive
- Anything that enables our people to reach their potential

There is no hierarchy in the areas of wellbeing listed above – all are equally important. There is also no single definition of wellbeing, as how this is interpreted will depend on the individual, their circumstances and their priorities. Therefore, using a holistic approach to ensure a clear understanding of the individual's views is vital to identifying and defining wellbeing in each case.

In this session, we explored what wellbeing could look like within organisations. By way of background the [NHS Health and Wellbeing Framework](#) was launched in 2018 and successfully used by over 70 NHS organisations. It speaks to an evidence base and rhetoric that predominantly focuses on 'reducing sickness absence'. There is evidence that the 70+ NHS organisation using the framework did reduce their sickness absence rates.

COVID-19 however has changed how we perceive health and wellbeing. It has placed greater emphasis on how caring for our NHS people, enables them to care for other. We need to move away from 'sickness absence' and toward creating a culture of wellbeing, that equally focuses on prevention and culture change.

The NHS has an ambition to take the best of the existing Health and Wellbeing (HWB) Framework and 'reimagine' it into a HWB Culture Change Toolkit to empower NHS organisations to create a sustainable 'wellbeing culture' for their workforce.

The plan is to achieve this at pace and through co-design with our system stakeholders as a toolkit by the NHS, for our NHS people. In this re-design, the key considerations are:

- Placing emphasis on culture change for HWB.
- Place greater emphasis on the prevention agenda and widen the scope of HWB.
- Embed equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Refresh the evidence base and gaps in the framework, both theory (i.e. empirical evidence) and best practice (i.e. case studies).
- A suite of accessible tools / documents (e.g. high-level framework, implementation toolkit, diagnostic tool, evidence base summary)

## Wellbeing Guardian

All NHS organisations should have a holistic approach to health and wellbeing and, where this is not routine practice already, the Wellbeing Guardian role is a pivotal enabler in helping to create such a culture. The role was successfully launched by NHSEI in January 2021 and an national online community development platform and development programme is available to support those taking on the role of role.

The Wellbeing Guardian takes an assurance role at Board level, in which they look at the organisation's activities through a holistic health and wellbeing lens. Their purpose is to:

- question decisions which might impact on the wellbeing of our NHS people
- challenge behaviours which are likely to be detrimental
- challenge the Board to account for its decisions and their impact on the health and wellbeing of our NHS people.
- remind the board to consider any unintended consequences of organisational actions and review them with a view to mitigating these.

The role is considered best suited to a Non-Executive Director (or equivalent) who does not need to have specialist knowledge about wellbeing but should be confident and competent in their ability to check and challenge the executive team on behalf of the board.

Operating in an inclusive manner, the Wellbeing Guardian will actively encourage a dispersed model of wellbeing leadership which engages ownership and advocacy across the organisation, valuing and building upon existing internal resource. As this becomes routine practice for the Board, the requirement for the Wellbeing Guardian to fulfil this role should reduce over time.

### **What can governors do to help?**

- Signposting staff to wellbeing initiatives and encouraging take up, including [NHS England and Improvement website of offers](#)
- Dialogue with the board on any forward plans in relation to wellbeing developments
- Using your holding to account duty to ask questions of the Non-Executive Directors, including Wellbeing Guardian, for example:
  - How are NEDs and the Wellbeing Guardian assured that we are using all the data and information available to us to inform wellbeing developments?
  - Why are we confident that wellbeing initiatives are effective and will be sustained beyond the crisis?
  - How are NEDs assured that all members of staff are aware of the support available to them and we are monitoring take up?
  - How are we learning from others to ensure we are continuously improving in this area?

- How can we ensure members are informed of the Trusts wellbeing initiatives for staff?

## **Mental health hubs**

Supporting mental wellbeing as one of the most common challenges facing the wellbeing of our workforce. NHS England and NHS Improvement has invested in strengthening mental health support for staff.

### **3 key components to the programme:**

1. 40 system-wide mental health and wellbeing hubs which provide rapid access to evidence based mental health services and psychosocial support where needed
2. A national enhanced mental health service for staff with complex needs, delivered by NHS Practitioner Health Service
3. Professional Nurse Advocate training which provides trainees with the necessary skills to facilitate restorative supervision to their colleagues and teams within Nursing Services and beyond.

The hub offer is confidential and free of charge for all health and social care staff. It is separate and confidential from the organisation.

Hubs deliver three key functions:

1. Deliver proactive outreach and engagement
2. Provide rapid clinical assessment
3. Provide care co-ordination and supported onward referral to deliver rapid access to mental health treatment

NHSE/I has expanded the [NHS Practitioner Health](#) service to put in place enhanced mental health support where hubs can refer the smaller percentage of staff, that may have more complex needs (such as complex traumatic stress reactions or addictions).

For details on the hubs including how to access your local hub go to:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/support-now/staff-mental-health-and-wellbeing-hubs/>

## **What governors can do to support the programme?**

### **Questioning**

- How are NEDs assured that the provision of the hub model is effective in their local area and staff are encouraged and supported to seek help when they need it?
- How is the board assessing whether the hubs are accessible to staff, and are they seeking and acting on feedback to promote learning and improvement?
- Are the NEDs assured that the Trust is making staff health and wellbeing a priority, what evidence do they have to base this on and are there systems in place to monitor this effectively?

## **Communications and engagement**

- Promote the Hubs and Practitioner Health Service at board level and ask what they are doing to help normalise seeking mental health support amongst staff
- Support understanding of how the hubs operate, e.g. it is not about replacing local organisational offers but about building on them or offering an alternative and can also help integrate the range of offers available locally.

## **Here For You – Staff Resilience Hub**

Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) in partnership with Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) run a support service in response to the pandemic. The service has been commissioned by NHS England and Improvement and all health, social care and voluntary/ not-for-profit health and care related staff can access it.

Staff can call or email 24/7 to confidentially talk through any problems they are facing. Here for You is an overarching service which prioritises staff needs, signposts staff to the right help at the right time, provides a priority referral if needed and helps rebuild resilience levels. It comprises in-reach and outreach services and includes follow ups.

Outputs so far include 474 calls to the service and 197 clinical assessments recorded, successful online workshops, webinars, 304 web page hits and 777 staff engagements in Here For You events. Here For You is run by experts in the mental health field and confidentiality is paramount.

<https://www.hereforyou.info/>

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