



# **GREATER MANCHESTER**

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# **WELLBEING TOOLKIT**

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Supporting the wellbeing of our workforce in Greater Manchester

# FOREWORD

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**The Covid-19 pandemic has placed unprecedented pressures on our health and care services and has changed the way we live and work.**

Here in Greater Manchester we should be incredibly proud of the way our people and services have responded to the pandemic, providing the very best care in the most challenging of circumstances. From hospitals, to community services and primary care, from our care homes to at-home carers, to our voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) services to our volunteers and unwaged carers, your unwavering dedication to the people you care for is truly remarkable. On behalf of the people of Greater Manchester, we remain extremely grateful for your ongoing hard work and commitment.

Working at such a challenging time has taken its toll. That is why it is so important that we continue to look after our own wellbeing – to keep building our resilience, to support those around us – and seek help when we need it. Only by looking after ourselves are we able to make sure we are in the best position to look after others.

This toolkit has been created with our broad and diverse health and care workforce in mind. To help make it as easy as possible to look after yourself, when you are so busy looking after others. We hope you find it easy to use, as well as open and honest about how difficult it can be to find time to look after ourselves. There is something here for everybody – so you can tailor what is available to meet your individual needs and your own busy schedule.

Thank you for taking the time to read this toolkit. We would encourage everyone who has used this toolkit to share something you have found valuable with someone else, to help spread the word about the importance of self-care and getting help when it is needed.

**Sarah Price**

Interim Chief Officer, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership (GMHSCP)

**Sir Richard Leese**

Chair of GMHSCP and Leader of the City of Manchester Council

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This toolkit has been created by the Workforce Team at the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership, with input and resources from across Greater Manchester, as well as the North West region and national bodies. We would like to thank everyone who has supported its development, provided content, and given vital feedback to ensure it is clear and accessible. We would particularly like to thank:

**Every Mind Matters – Public Health England**

**Greater Manchester Resilience Hub**

**Macc**

**MIND**

**NHS In Mind**

**NHS Employers**

**NHS North West Leadership Academy**

**North West Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (NW ADASS)**

**Oscar kilo**

**Our NHS People**

**Skills for Care**

**Thriving at Work: Stevenson / Farmer Review**

# INTRODUCTION

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For us, wellbeing is about three things:



the **physical** support that helps you to be at your best



the **practical** aspects of what makes your working day easier



the **psychological** care to help keep your mental health well

## What is wellbeing?

**Good wellbeing is when we are able to be at our best, both at work and home. It is something that is personal to the individual and we all need something different to maintain good wellbeing for ourselves, depending on our circumstances, norms, and behaviours.**

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the impact on the ways that we work, our home lives and the communities around us has been unparalleled. For many of us working across our public services in Greater Manchester, this has meant that we have stepped up in ways that we would never have anticipated or planned for. The resilience and strength that each of us have shown has been remarkable. In a matter of weeks, we evolved and re-organised how we do things – both in our home and working lives.

As the pandemic continues, and we are all feeling fatigued by the sustained nature of evolving changes at work and the impacts of national restrictions – it is critical that we continue to pay conscious attention to our wellbeing.

## Who is this toolkit for?

**This toolkit has been developed by Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership for the benefit of our health and care workforce, including colleagues in the NHS and social care, as well as those in the voluntary sector, those delivering health and care services in the private sector and our unwaged workforce too. It is designed with this workforce in mind; however, it is hoped that the toolkit can support anyone navigating the challenges of working during the pandemic.**

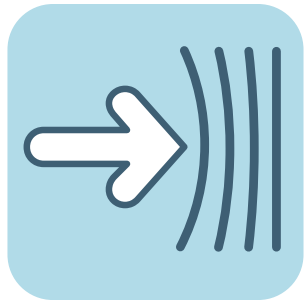
We know there are lots of offers of support out there to access, but this can feel overwhelming at times and hard to connect with when we need them the most. So, we have listened to your feedback and in response, we have collated this toolkit to help make it easier for you to look after yourself, your teams at work, and your families at home.

We have kept this toolkit simple, practical and relevant to the ways that you are working (whether at home or in your place of work) – just as you asked. We will keep developing this live resource to make sure it brings together the best of the support available to you.

## How to use it

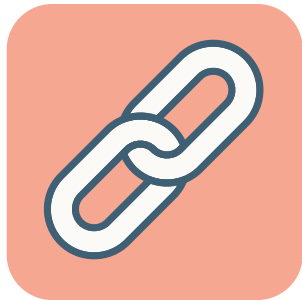
This toolkit is interactive – so you can digest the whole thing at once or jump to the section that is relevant for you. As well as sharing top tips and useful resources, it also includes templates and guides which you can download and share, or adapt for your own organisation.

The toolkit is divided into three sections:



### Looking after yourself

It is important that where possible we are pro-active about the ways we approach our wellbeing and build our physical and mental resilience to help us respond to the challenges of working in a pandemic.



### Supporting others

Whether you are a manager or a supportive colleague, there are lots of ways we can look after one another - through buddy systems, good conversations, introducing debriefing sessions and more.



### Responding to need

It is vital that we recognise when we need to reach out for help. There is a broad range of support in Greater Manchester available at our fingertips - both online and more personal, depending on what works best for you.

## Share this toolkit with others

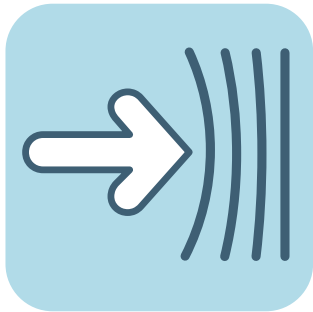
If you have found this toolkit to be useful, we would encourage you to share it with colleagues, or even family or friends. We have provided a **poster** you can print and display in a staff area or you could **simply share this link** in your team WhatsApp or Facebook Group.

This toolkit will continue to be a live resource, regularly updated based on the feedback you give us and providing new resources as they become available. Therefore, please **share the link** rather than a copy of the document itself, to ensure you share the latest version.

We welcome your feedback on how you have used this toolkit and any improvements we can make. Please share your feedback with us to **[gm.workforce@nhs.net](mailto:gm.workforce@nhs.net)**.

This toolkit is uncopyrighted. When sharing it directly with colleagues or as a link on your website, please include an attribution to the **[Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership](#)**, 2021.

# LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF



**It is important that we look after ourselves to be at our best – physically, practically, and psychologically. While we are in the middle of responding to a pandemic, it's easy to put the needs of others first – our service users, our colleagues, or our family – and forget to look after ourselves.**

Looking after yourself is critical to being at your physical and mental best, and this section will help raise awareness and make the changes that will help you to put your best foot forward every day.

## Staying active



We all know that being physically active helps us feel good about ourselves, be more productive, and supports better quality sleep and relaxation. Engaging in physical exercise alleviates stress and increases endorphins with positive impacts on mental health.

Sometimes it can be daunting to get started, so [GreaterSport](#) are working to help us all get more active in our working day. Have a look at this [Active Workplaces Toolkit](#) for guidance on the small changes you can make to your working day to improve your health and wellbeing.

You can start with some of these simple steps:

- Make sure you have regular breaks away from your desk and do something physical that you enjoy.
- Set yourself some goals and commit to walking a mile every other day for the first week, and add more distance each time you walk, or increase the frequency. There is lots of walking advice on the [Greater Manchester Walking website](#) or take the [Daily Mile](#) challenge.
- Explore your local area on foot, or get on your bike to discover new ways of getting from A to B. Find great tips from [GM Moving](#) on cycling across Greater Manchester.
- Cycle or walk to work when you can and take advantage of cycle and travel schemes in your workplace.

Whatever you choose to do – this is about the simple things we can do every day to live well. And don't forget to have a look at the [Greater Sport website](#) to see the wide range of activities that you, your family and your colleagues can do to keep moving and physically active.



You may be aware of [Mind's Five Ways to Wellbeing](#). They are simple and proven actions that you can find balance, build resilience and boost your mental health and wellbeing.

**STAY  
CONNECTED**

**TAKE  
NOTICE**

**GIVE  
TO OTHERS**

**BE  
ACTIVE**

**KEEP  
LEARNING**

## Eating well



Eating a healthy balanced diet is a vital part of maintaining good wellbeing and being able to function at your best. It also

helps with having a stronger immune system, better sleep and helping your mood and energy levels.

We all know about the advice to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, as well as drinking plenty of water across the day to make sure you stay hydrated – but many of us can struggle to do this. Have a look at the [Live Well, Eat Well](#) guides on the NHS websites.



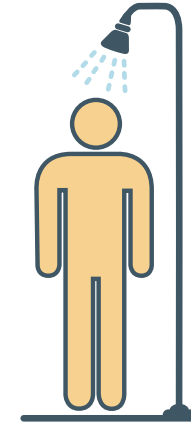
## Drinking well



It is important to stay hydrated to keep our bodies well hydrated and functioning properly. We should be drinking fluids regularly throughout the day. These are some important times to remember to have a drink:



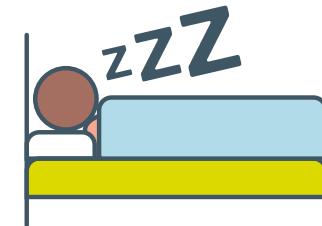
**AFTER WAKING UP**  
Activate internal organs



**BEFORE TAKING A BATH**  
Lower blood pressure



**30 MINUTES BEFORE A MEAL**  
Improve digestion  
Calorie burning benefits



**BEFORE GOING TO BED**  
Hydrating benefits  
Promotes better sleep  
Toxin clearing benefits  
Calorie burning benefits

## Financial advice



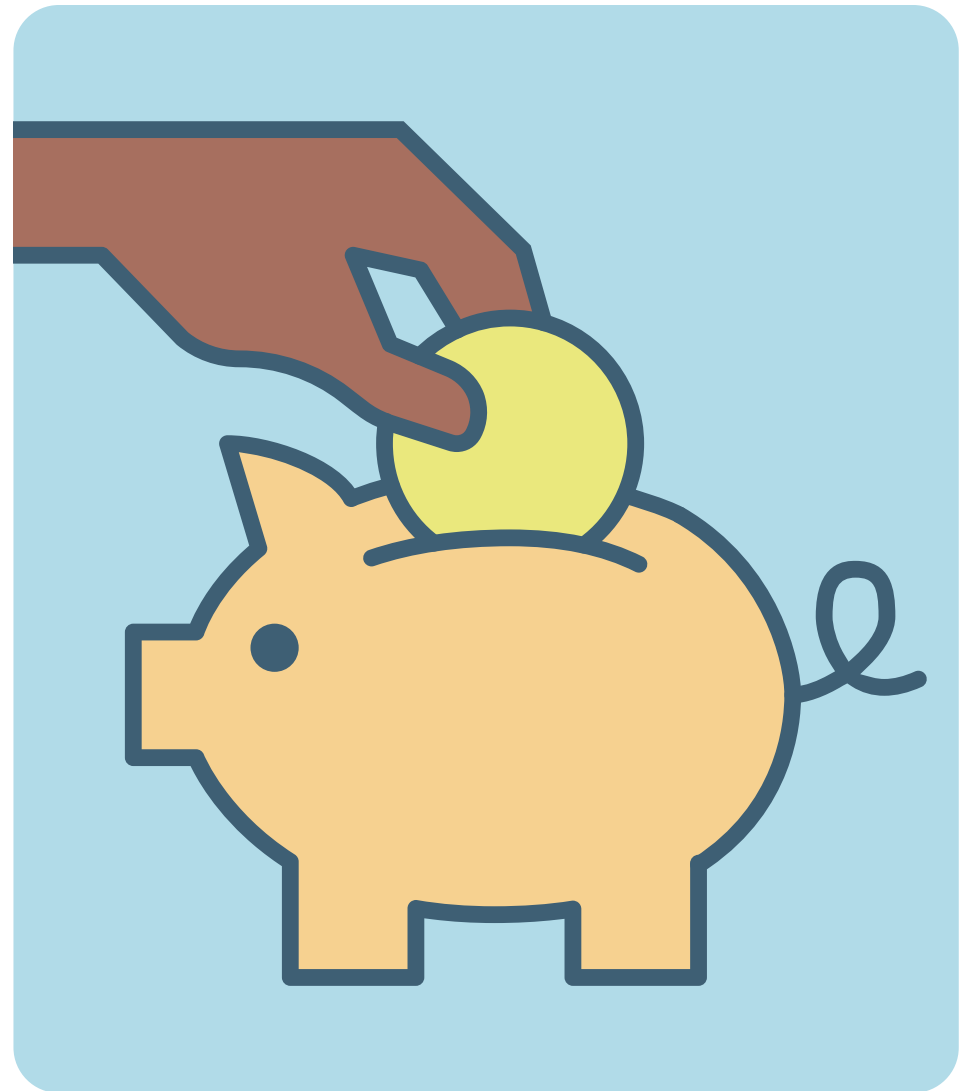
Managing our finances can be challenging under normal circumstances, and the pandemic has only increased the financial pressures many of us are facing. Whether it is concerns about job security, a reduction in your household income, or an increase in your running costs at home – sometimes it can be hard to see a pathway through. There is support that you can access, with tailored advice and support for your individual circumstances, to help you find solutions that work for you and your family.

If you need financial support now, you can contact the [Money Advice Service](#) for free, confidential and impartial money advice by telephone on 0800 448 0826 or via WhatsApp (message +44 7701 342 744) or view their range of online services.

The Money Advice Service also offers a series of webinars held with experts. These sessions cover a range of topics to help manage your finances and/or help you support others.

You can watch recordings of the latest virtual interactive events here:

- [Should I save or pay off debts?](#)
- [Why it pays to save regularly](#)
- [When and where to get pensions help and advice](#)
- [Pensions and retirement](#)



## Remote working



One of the unintended consequences of the pandemic is that many of us not on the frontline are now working from home. This has its benefits – we are able to stay safe, have reduced travel times to our places of work, and are able to work with less distractions.

However, many of us are missing the connection and support of our colleagues, are less physically active during the working day, and find ourselves working harder and longer as the lines between home and work become blurred. We are also less likely to feel connected with work developments around us, and unable to see the pressures our colleagues are under when not in physical contact on a regular basis. More recently, this has included increased childcare and home schooling for parents while still trying to work either from home or the workplace. This will continue to shift again as restrictions change.

Check out this handy [guide](#) to working well remotely; from the way that you set your space up and the seat you sit on; to the need to set reasonable work/rest boundaries. It is important to try and create and maintain a routine and schedule with designated spaces to work, where possible. It is also recommended to schedule regular breaks – whether it's to grab a glass of water (recommended two to three litres per day) or go for a short walk and get some fresh air.

## Flexible working



For some of us, the pandemic has given us the opportunity to work more flexibly to meet the needs of both our work and home demands – whilst making sure that we meet the targets and needs of our jobs.

This may mean starting work earlier to finish at a reasonable time; having the opportunity to take a longer break during the working day to take some exercise, or help family members to meet the practical needs of your day to day lives. It's important that we communicate and agree this with our colleagues and teams, so they know when they can contact you, without feeling a sense of frustration when they can't get in touch.

You can use this [Flexible Working Conversation Starter](#) which includes suggestions of the things you may want to think about when planning your flexible working pattern. It will also help you plan the conversation with your manager or team leader about how flexible working may look for your role – whether at home or on site.

## Taking care of your stress bucket



The causes of stress can vary from pressures in the workplace, or challenges at home. There is rarely a single source of stress, instead it will be a combination of things layering on top of each other.

While they may not be significant problems on their own, if we are not proactive about relieving our stresses over time, they can build up to become a significant problem. Imagine your stresses are dripping into a bucket – everyday that bucket will get fuller and fuller, until it will reach a point where the bucket overflows.

The good news is that we can do something about this. It is important that we recognise what causes these day-to-day stresses and take steps to relieve them – and release the stresses before they begin to overflow. For some, this is about being physically active, eating well or getting enough sleep. For others, it is about knowing where you have a safe space to talk, decompress from a stressful day, or practicing breathing or meditation techniques.

By being aware of what causes our stress and anxieties, and putting actions into place to release the pressures, we can develop stronger resilience, and improve our ability to respond to challenges as they present themselves. Have a look at these handy tools to help you manage or improve your motivation, anxiety, relaxation, sleep or diet:



- [Finding your motivation](#)
- [Dealing with anxiety](#)
- [Better breathing to help your stress](#)
- [Improve your sleep](#)
- [Eating for wellbeing](#)

Greater  
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Health and  
Social Care  
Partnership

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Social Care  
Partnership

## Finding support in your communities

You can contact your local voluntary and community groups to find out information about activities in your area, as well as local faith organisations shared by [GMCVO](#) and [10GM](#). Alternately you may want to look at the [Local Inter Faith](#) groups in your area.

For those who would like to find advice, support and information services for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) communities, you can contact the [LGBT Foundation](#).

## Finding time to look after yourself

**Often finding or making the time to look after our wellbeing is the biggest challenge; with long shifts or back to back meetings, it is difficult to ensure we factor it in to our day to day routine.**

Here are some suggestions for ways we can all make sure we are regularly making the time to check in on our own wellbeing:

- Block out protected time in your diary, whether it is fifteen minutes every day or one hour once a week
- If you are going into the workplace, do a quick check in or some breathing exercises on your way home.
- If you're working from home, build a commute into your day by going for a walk or practice some self-care



## When to ask for help

The pandemic has been a challenging time for us all – both in the workplace and at home. This is especially true for colleagues who have been involved in the pandemic response.

That's why it's crucial that we are open and honest about the pressures and demands we are facing and know when we may need some support ourselves.

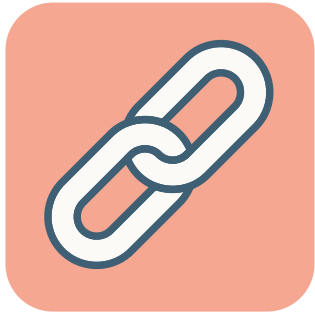
Here are some of the signs to pay attention to:

- If you are experiencing **high levels of distress**.
- If you are **unable to focus** at work or home or are unable to perform daily activities.
- If you have significantly **increased your use of alcohol** and/or substances.
- If those around you are very **worried about you**.
- If you are worried about your ability to **keep yourself safe**.

You may recognise and experience some of these at some points and that can be fine from time to time. However, when they become more regular, or you feel like it's a little bit harder to get through the day to day challenges, that's when you may need to [ask for help](#).



# SUPPORTING OTHERS



As we improve our awareness of how to look after our own wellbeing, we can find that we will also be able to recognise the needs and challenges of our peers and teams – and offer better support for those around us.

There are lots of practical ways we can improve how our teams work together, stay connected and be a source of peer support when needed.

## Check in with your team

It's great practice to check in with each other on a regular basis; to help decompress the challenges at work and collaborate on solutions when working at pace.

This **Check In/Check Out guide** can be used by individuals or as a team. It includes questions to help you reflect on your day and supports the transition back to your home life.

## Debrief with your team

Debriefing is an important mechanism for reflection and handing over at the end of a shift. It is just as valuable for the individual as the whole team as it helps us decompress from the working day and set boundaries between when we are working and when we aren't.

There are some simple steps that can help you to debrief effectively as a team:

- **Reflect on what has gone well**, and what you would want to change in the future. What have you learnt from this? Remember – giving feedback is not a debrief.
- **Focus on how to improve**, rather than evaluate or judge what happened.
- **Concentrate on specifics** – details, incidents, or events - rather than general or sweeping statements.
- Make sure you **have the input of others**, and actively listen to the different viewpoints and perspectives.



## Introduce a Buddy Network

Being social with your work colleagues is an essential part of your support network. Your colleagues can be a great source of support, whether it's virtual or face to face.

You may want to consider setting up a Buddy Network in your team. A Buddy Network pairs colleagues together, often people who do not work together regularly, to offer regular peer to peer support in an informal way. This **handy guide** gives you some tips on setting up a buddy network, as well some clear boundaries on what a buddy is and isn't.

## Join a staff network

You may also want to have a look at the staff networks or support groups your workplace may have – from LGBT+, Carers, to inclusion groups – if there isn't a group just right for you, then look to set one up, or there may be a Greater Manchester or national network for you to join.



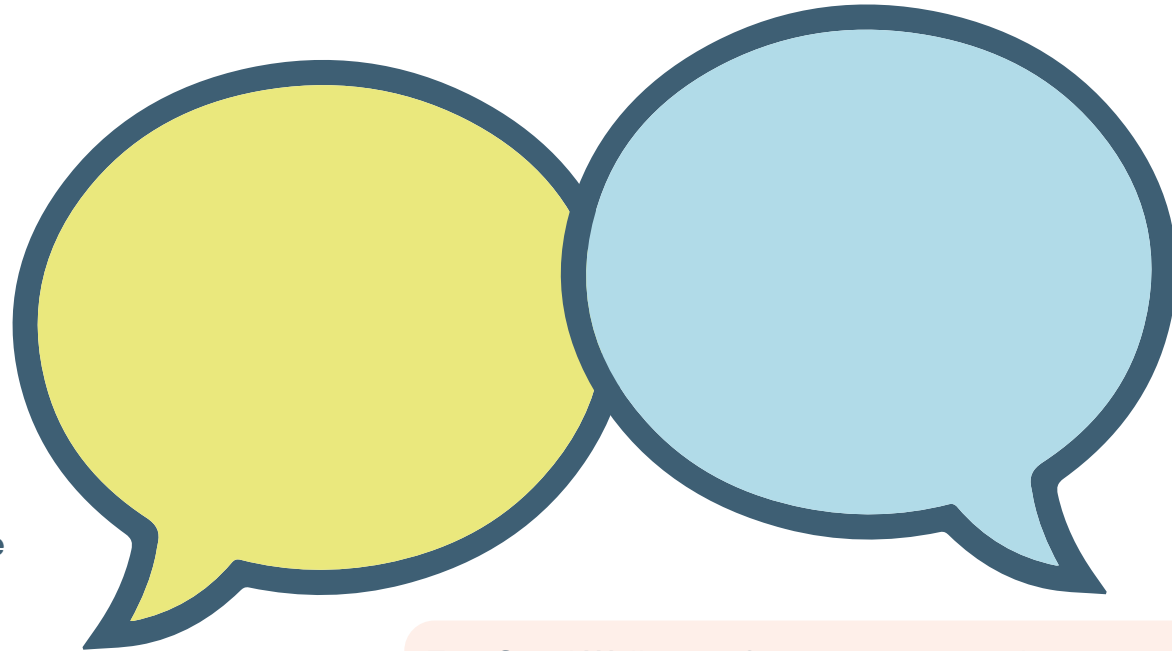
## Supporting your team – best practice for managers

Managers and team leaders have an important role to play in supporting the wellbeing of their team. As a manager you can help support colleagues to prioritise their wellbeing as well as setting a good example by looking after your own.

### Starting good conversations

It can be hard when working in such a busy environment to remember to have conversations with our teams. This is especially true when we are pressed for time, distracted by emails or phone calls, or feeling overwhelmed by the volume of work.

Being a good listener and asking how someone is, is a simple and important part of demonstrating your support and understanding how you can advise in the best way possible.



This [Good Wellbeing Conversations guide](#) can be used on a regular basis to stay connected with your teams and is there to enhance (and not replace) any internal processes you have for appraisals or performance conversations. This list of [suggested questions](#) is based on good coaching techniques to help the person you are speaking with to reflect and share how they are feeling and doing. They will help you plan your discussion, and make sure that you cover all aspects – in case you get side-tracked!

If you would like a bit more structure, you may want to have a look at this [Wellbeing Action Plan](#) to help structure your discussions over time.

## Sharing the support available

As a manager or team leader it's important that you spend some time getting to know your team members and how to help them be at their best in the workplace. You will find each person needs something different and will bring something unique and valuable to the team.

It is important to remember that it's the individual's responsibility to look after themselves first and foremost and stay as well as they can. However, you can be a supportive manager by encouraging the individual to **look after themselves** and find the **support they need** from a range of services.

It would also be a good idea to familiarise yourself with these one-page guides, to support good conversations:

- **Finding your motivation**
- **Dealing with anxiety**
- **Better breathing for stress**
- **Improve your sleep**
- **Eating for wellbeing**



## Skilling yourself up

Why not develop your understanding of how to look after your psychological wellbeing, and those around you, by undertaking online training on the following?

**Psychological First Aid:** This training module takes around 90 minutes to complete and is also available in three sessions for you to complete at your own pace. By the end of the course, outcomes will include understanding how emergencies like the Covid-19 pandemic can affect us, recognising people who may be at increased risk of distress and understanding how to offer practical and emotional support.

**Suicide Prevention:** Learn to save a life in 20 minutes. This course aims to give you the skills and confidence to help someone who may be considering suicide. It focuses on breaking stigma and encouraging open conversations.



# RESPONDING TO NEED



It is a good first step to recognise when you may need a little more support. We can all have that occasional bad day or feel like we are not doing a great job – because it really is okay not to be okay from time to time – but nobody should be struggling over a long period of time.

Whether you are struggling to focus on work or home – if you are in distress about things that wouldn't ordinarily bother you, or if you, or those around you, are noticing a difference in your behaviours – it may be time to ask for help.

There are several options to find the support you need, in a way that works for you:

## Speaking with someone

You can speak directly and confidentially online or on the telephone with services across Greater Manchester – and you don't need to tell anyone else if you don't want to. From helping to manage your stress, support for your children at home, or advice with those financial worries – there are lots of options for you to find the right one for you:



## Financial advice

If you need financial advice now, you can contact the [Money Advice Service](#) for free, confidential and impartial money advice by telephone on **0800 448 0826** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) or via WhatsApp (**+44 7701 342 744**).

## Community and Faith groups

Find out more information about the community and faith groups in your area and how they can support you – information at [GMCVO](#) and [10GM](#), and [Inter Faith](#) groups in your area.

## LGBT Foundation

To find advice, support and information services for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) communities, you can contact the [LGBT Foundation](#).



### Greater Manchester Resilience Hub

0333 009 5071

[GM.Help@nhs.net](mailto:GM.Help@nhs.net)

The Greater Manchester Resilience Hub provides a central point for mental health advice and support, for health and care workers and their families who have been impacted by the pandemic, including families and children advice and bereavement support.

### Greater Manchester Bereavement Service

0161 983 0902

[salccg.gm.bs@nhs.net](mailto:salccg.gm.bs@nhs.net)

This is available for anyone in Greater Manchester who has been bereaved or affected by a death. No one needs to feel alone as they deal with their grief.

### Samaritans

0800 069 6222

Samaritans provide a confidential support line open 7am to 11pm, 7 days a week, and is run by dedicated and trained Samaritan volunteers. This support line is here for when you've had a tough day, are feeling worried, or overwhelmed by what's on your mind and need to talk it through. Trained advisers can help with signposting and confidential listening.



### SHOUT- for support in crisis

Text GM to **85258**

Shout is a free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging mental health support service for anyone who is struggling to cope. It offers anonymised human conversation at the end of the phone.

### Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Helpline

**0161 636 7525**

If you are in immediate danger then ring 999. If you cannot talk either press '55' on a mobile or wait on a landline until you are connected with the police. If you are worried that you, or someone you know may be experiencing domestic abuse, then contact the 24-hour Refuge line on **0808 2000 247**.

### Contact your trade union

If you are a member of a trade union, you will be able to access their range of support covering your welfare, financial wellbeing, flexible working and more.

It is also important to consider that your organisation may have an **Employee Assistance Programme** available for you to access directly to support your psychological wellbeing and provide practical advice.

## Online support

There is a range of online support and tools that you can access for guidance, counselling, or advice:

### Every Mind Matters

This resource provides guidance on looking after your wellbeing while working from home, with simple tips and how to create your own Mind Plan to start taking better care of your mental wellbeing.

### Greater Manchester Health Hub – Living Life to the Full

Living Life to the Full provides free online courses for all Greater Manchester residents covering low mood, stress and resiliency.

### GMHSCP mental health and wellbeing and resources

Links and resources for all health and care staff to access across Greater Manchester.

### Greater Manchester's Silvercloud

Online programmes for adults 16+ to help ease stress, improve sleep, or build resilience. This resource is self-help, confidential and secure.

### Kooth

Safe and anonymous online mental wellbeing support and links for young people in your family.

### Notice a substance increase?

GM Health Hub can also help if you are noticing an increase in your substance intake. Get help and advice if you are concerned about Smoking, Alcohol or Drugs.

### NHSinMind

Online resource offering techniques designed to help health and care staff alleviate and combat high anxiety, panic and fatigue. Included are tutorials, recorded exercises and YouTube links to ensure staff have the tools they need at their fingertips at any point during the day.

### #OurNHSPeople

Available to everyone who is a part of the health and care response to the pandemic. Telephone: **0800 06 96 222** (7am-11pm)/ Bereavement: **0300 303 4434** (8am-8pm) Text 'FRONTLINE' to **85258** – 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Or get free access to a number of wellbeing apps. You can find all the details and further information at **#OurNHSPeople**

There are also online reference guides for personal and team resilience, as well as support for staff during life events and festivities.

\*Some Our NHS People resources may require an NHS email to access.

## Speaking with your manager

Finally, your line or team manager will be able to advise and signpost you to services offered by your organisation or network.

From working with you to develop a **Wellbeing Action Plan**; help access your **Mental Health First Aider** networks; to signposting you to **Occupational Health** services who can help with referrals to counselling or physiotherapy – there is a network of support available through your organisation or network body.



## Feedback

We welcome your feedback on how you have used this toolkit and any improvements we can make. Please share your feedback with us to [gm.workforce@nhs.net](mailto:gm.workforce@nhs.net).

## And don't forget to share this toolkit with others!

If you have found this toolkit to be useful, we would encourage you to share it with colleagues, or even family or friends.

This toolkit will continue to be a live resource, regularly updated based on the feedback you give us and providing new resources as they become available. Therefore, please [share the link](#) rather than a copy of the document itself, to ensure you share the latest version. We have provided a [poster](#) you can print and display in a staff area or you could simply [share this link](#) in your team WhatsApp or Facebook Group.

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