



May
2026

GRAMPIAN

Wellbeing

festival

Workplace Wellbeing

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The Grampian Wellbeing Festival is an annual event which brings together communities through activities that promote and support good mental health and wellbeing.



Promoting positive mental wellbeing in Grampian

Welcome to the Grampian Wellbeing Festival!

Welcome to the Grampian Wellbeing Festival - a month long programme designed to support and enhance wellbeing across our communities, including the workplace. The festival provides an opportunity to pause, reflect, and actively promote wellbeing in ways that are meaningful, practical, and sustainable.

As a member of your team, you play a vital role in shaping a workplace culture where wellbeing is valued, supported, and spoken about openly. The Grampian Wellbeing Festival offers a range of activities, workshops, and resources that you can use to encourage positive wellbeing conversations and help staff develop healthy habits that can be maintained beyond the festival. Alongside our programme of hosted events, this booklet introduces what wellbeing is, why it matters, and provides some practical ways to build wellbeing into your workplace.

The festival is built around the 5 Ways of Wellbeing - Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning, and Give. These evidence based principles are proven to support mental health and overall wellbeing. By encouraging staff to engage with these themes in ways that suit their individual circumstances, and by leading through positive role modelling where appropriate, all staff, no matter who they are or what position they hold in the organisation, can make a meaningful difference to how wellbeing is experienced at work.

Importantly, the Grampian Wellbeing festival happens every May, but looking after your wellbeing is something that we need to manage all year round. Additional resources are included to support wellbeing throughout the year, helping staff continue to build positive habits beyond the festival.

Your support, understanding, and encouragement during the festival - and throughout the year - can help create a more resilient, engaged, and healthy workforce.

We hope you find these resources useful to help improve your staff's wellbeing.

We would love to hear about any wellbeing activities you organise during May, so please tag us on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/GrampianWellbeingFestival or email GrampianWellbeingFestival@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Best Wishes

Grampian Wellbeing Festival Team



What is mental wellbeing and how can it impact the workplace?

Mental Wellbeing is “A dynamic state, in which the individual is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others, and contribute to their community. It is enhanced when an individual is able to fulfil their personal and social goals and achieve a sense of purpose in society.”¹

Mental health and work key facts

- The majority of people who died by suicide in 2024 were aged 25 - 64 (69%).
- Around 300,000 employees with long-term mental health conditions leave employment annually in the UK, significantly more than those with physical health conditions.
- Estimated cost to UK employers: up to £42 billion/year, excluding sickness absence and turnover.

See Me Scottish Mental Health Stigma Survey, 2022

- 63% of respondents had experienced at least one characteristic of burnout – feeling of exhaustion, mental distance from their job, or decline in performance at work.
- 16% said they were planning to leave their job in the next 12 months, and 11% had left their previous job in the last 12 months. 59% said it was somewhat, largely or entirely due to personal mental health and wellbeing-related issues.
- Mental ill health is the top cause of long-term absence at work (with 41% of respondents citing it within top three causes) (Deloitte, 2024).
- 60% of Scots think there is a fair amount or a great deal of shame associated with mental illness (See Me, March 2024).
- 19% of British workers have taken time off work for their mental health, and 63% of this group say they have not always been honest about their reason for needing a day off work (YouGov Survey for See Me, 2022).
- 38% of Scottish workers think that people in their workplace would be unlikely to speak about a mental health problem for fear of losing their job (Census wide for See Me, 2022).

‘Workplace wellbeing’ is about supporting employees’ mental, emotional, and physical health. More organisations are focusing on it because a healthy workforce is more engaged, productive, and resilient. Numerous studies have shown that employee wellbeing is linked to greater productivity.

1. UK Government Office for Science. Mental capital and wellbeing: making the most of ourselves in the 21st century.

The 5 ways of wellbeing

The 5 Ways of Wellbeing are a simple, evidence based set of actions that support positive mental health and wellbeing. They are designed to be easy to build into everyday life and can make a real difference to how teams feel at work. By encouraging these habits, managers and staff can help create a more supportive, motivated, and resilient workplace.

You may be thinking how can I help manage my wellbeing and the wellbeing of my team. The best way you can do this is to lead by example. Below you will find some examples of how to make wellbeing practice part of your culture.



Connect

Positive relationships at work matter. Taking time to check in with colleagues, have conversations, and strengthen team bonds helps everyone feel valued and supported.

An opportunity to strengthen relationships and create a supportive workplace culture.

Teams could:

- Build in regular check-ins (one to ones, team meetings, wellbeing conversations).
- Create opportunities for staff to collaborate or share updates informally.
- Encourage buddy systems or peer support networks for new or returning staff.
- Foster inclusive spaces where everyone feels heard and valued.
- Host a virtual or in-person coffee morning to help colleagues connect.



Be Active

Movement boosts mood and energy. This doesn't have to mean gym sessions - walking meetings, stretching, or a lunchtime stroll all contribute to wellbeing.

Take the time to make movement easier and normal practice during the working day.

Teams could:

- Promote walking meetings or 'stretch breaks'.
- Provide space or time for physical activity (e.g. lunchtime walks, onsite classes).
- Ensure staff have appropriate equipment, complete workstation assessments and encourage posture breaks.
- Share local physical activities or wellbeing opportunities such as the [Grampian Wellbeing Festival Programme](#).
- Organise team step challenges or lunchtime walks to encourage being active.



Take Notice

Encouraging staff to pause, reflect, and appreciate the moment helps reduce stress. Noticing small successes or expressing gratitude also improves focus and morale.

Mindfulness is a practice that can help staff pause, reflect, and reduce stress.

Teams could:

- Encourage breaks away from screens and desks.
- Build mindfulness, “pause and breathe” or reflective moments into meetings (e.g., “What went well this week?”).
- Promote a tidy, calm workspace and reduce unnecessary noise or interruptions.
- Celebrate successes and recognise achievements regularly.



Keep Learning

Learning new things builds confidence and motivation. This could be formal training, shadowing a colleague, or simply trying a new task or approach.

‘Every day is a School day.’ Encourage growth, curiosity, and development (professional and non professional).

Teams could:

- Offer accessible training, development plans, or shadowing opportunities.
- Support staff to explore new tasks, projects, or responsibilities.
- Create a culture where continuous improvement is valued, not pressured.
- Provide protected time for learning and personal development.
- Offer mini-learning sessions or skill-sharing lunches.



Give

Acts of kindness - like offering help, sharing knowledge, or recognising a colleague - build a positive, connected workplace culture and boost personal satisfaction.

Giving is not all about money. Giving is helping promote kindness, contribution, and working with purpose.

Teams could:

- Encourage acts of appreciation - thank-you boards, shout-outs, or team recognition.
- Provide opportunities for staff to share skills, mentor others, or get involved in initiatives.
- Support charity or volunteering days, where appropriate.
- Ensure roles have clear purpose so staff feel their work makes a difference.

Resources to promote for staff wellbeing

The following links will take you to some resources that can be shared and used with the workforce:

- **5 Ways of Wellbeing Planner**
Steps towards taking action for your wellbeing doesn't have to take up long periods of time. The Wellbeing Planner can be utilised by staff to support their own journey following the 5 Ways of Wellbeing. The Planner provides some simple examples of activity whether someone has 5-15 minutes free, or up to 1 hour to dedicate to improving their wellbeing. This list isn't exhaustive, but provides some inspiration to start their wellbeing journey.
- **Grampian Wellbeing Festival Programme**
Each year, the festival offers a wide range of free face-to-face and online activities for people of all ages. You can share this programme with staff and encourage them to try something new.
www.nhsgrampian.org/your-health/wellbeing-festival/
- **Wellbeing Bingo**
This tool can be used to help start the wellbeing discussion with staff at the beginning of a meeting. Ask each person to colour as appropriate and discuss the areas for improvement or where staff are doing well – as long as staff are comfortable enough to share. It could be useful for them to do this privately and have time to reflect on their results.
www.nhsgrampian.org/your-health/wellbeing-festival/

Evaluating wellbeing in the workplace

Deloitte's (2022-2025) research highlights the growing importance of robust wellbeing metrics in the workplace, showing that poor mental health - such as stress and burnout cost UK employers an estimated £51 billion in 2020-2021, up from £45 billion in 2019.

A significant portion of this financial burden stems from presenteeism, where employees attend work but perform below capacity due to ill health. Evidence shows that when organisations actively support staff wellbeing - through manager check-ins, workload adjustments, and promotion of support resources - they can substantially offset these losses. Deloitte's findings indicate an average return of £4.70 for every £1 invested in mental health initiatives, driven by gains in productivity and reductions in absenteeism and staff turnover. This nearly 5:1 Rate of Investment (ROI), which has strengthened over recent years, underscores the value of tracking and improving workplace wellbeing as a core driver of organisational performance.

How to know if you are managing staff wellbeing effectively

Effective staff wellbeing management combines measurable data (such as absences) with direct feedback from employees. When wellbeing is well managed, employees are healthier, more engaged, and more productive, and support

is proactive rather than reactive, addressing mental, physical, social, and financial wellbeing.

Signs of effective wellbeing management include lower sickness absence, reduced staff turnover, strong productivity, and positive engagement survey results. Use of workforce policy, such as planned appraisals or one to ones, flexible working options, managing breaks effectively, introducing wellbeing activity or wellbeing windows, also shows that staff feel safe and supported in accessing help.

Qualitative indicators are equally important. These include open conversations about wellbeing, a healthy work life balance, positive team relationships, and managers noticing early changes in behaviour before issues escalate. Leaders who model good wellbeing practices help embed a supportive workplace culture.

To maintain effectiveness, organisations could hold regular wellbeing check-ins, use anonymous staff surveys, review workloads regularly, and learn from exit interviews. It's helpful to teams consider and feedback, what is working well for the team, what could be improved and if there is anything else that can be done to support team wellbeing. If teams perform well, maintain good morale, and feel supported during challenging periods, this is a strong indication that staff wellbeing is being managed successfully.

Further resources

To continue your journey of wellbeing, please go through the programme again and identify any organisations that interest you so you can follow up with them.

Below you will find a list of tools and information to support continued promotion for managing wellbeing and promoting actions for applying 5 ways of wellbeing into everyday life.

Your 'Appy' Place

NHS Scotland promotes several free, evidence-based apps for wellbeing. These tools support stress management, resilience, and mental health, often accessible via the National Wellbeing Hub.

Mental health and anxiety

- Daylight: Daylight is a self-referral online programme to help with anxiety. It is based on CBT principles and has a strong RCT evidence base. It is a structured programme, available instantly, and can be accessed 24/7 including for use when people are struggling.
- Sleepio: Sleepio is a free, evidence-based, digital Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) programme for insomnia and poor sleep, available to all residents in Scotland through NHS Scotland. It helps users fall asleep faster and reduce nightly waking through a 6-week programme, accessible via web or app.
- SilverCloud: Structured CBT programmes for anxiety, depression, and stress (use code: Wellhubscot).
- Feeling Good: Audio programme combining relaxation and sports coaching for a positive mindset.
- WellMind: Helps with stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Mind yer Mind: Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership's Mind yer Mind campaign encourages the people of Aberdeenshire to look after their mental wellbeing.

Mind yer Mind is based on the 5 Ways to Wellbeing and offers easy-to-digest advice, as well as a list of resources and places across Aberdeenshire, that can help you to look after your mental wellbeing. See link below for more information.

www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/mind-yer-mind/

Mindfulness and resilience

- Headspace: Guided meditation for mindfulness.
- Equoo: A game designed to build resilience and tackle anxiety.
- Buddhify: App focused on mindfulness on-the-go.
- Calm Harm: Helps manage the urge to self-harm.
- BlueIce: Designed for young people to manage difficult emotions.
- SafeSpot: Coping strategies for young people.
- Combined Minds: Supports young people with mental health.
- MeeTwo: A safe forum to promote to any teenagers who may be part of the workforce or any parents/carers looking for support options for their children.

General health and physical wellbeing:

- NHS 24 Online: For symptom assessment and finding local services.
- NHS 24 MSK Help app: Support for musculoskeletal issues.
- NHS Food Scanner: For finding healthier food options.
- NHS Weight Loss Plan: A 12-week weight management programme.
- MyCare.scot: Digital access to health and social care information.
- We Care: Wellbeing support for health and social care staff.

Healthy Working Lives

Who are we?

The Health and Work Team has the skills, knowledge, and experience to provide a flexible framework to support organisations from all sectors to develop a planned and integrated approach to create a healthier workforce. Keeping staff healthy and motivated can deliver significant business benefits; reduced staff turnover, decreased sickness absence, higher productivity, and an increased reputation as an employer of choice.

What do we do?

The services provided by the Workplace Team are developed in-house, combining the specialist knowledge and skills of our staff. They are designed specifically for workplaces whether large or small and can be arranged to fit in with the working day. The topics covered are in response to the requests from workplaces in Grampian and some are available separately for management or staff.

Why not sign up to workplace newsletters:

This bi-monthly newsletter provides relevant information and practical tips to support employee wellbeing programmes, while also signposting to training opportunities and awareness raising sessions on a range of topics.

The Construction Newsletter:

This newsletter aims to promote staff health and wellbeing, with a focus on construction staff needs.

Email gram.hwl@nhs.scot to sign up.

Check out the workplace calendars:

These themed calendars have been developed in order to enhance staff health and wellbeing campaigns, events, and programmes across workplaces and sectors.

Sign up to a free training or awareness session:

Keep an eye out for some of the Healthy Working Lives' training sessions that will be taking place through the month of May:

- Breathing Space NHS 24 (Wednesday 27th May, 2pm to 3pm): Increase knowledge and understanding of Scotland's phone line and webchat service.
- Mentally Healthy Workplace Training for Managers and Supervisors (date: end of May TBC): Highlighting employers' responsibilities and improving managers and supervisors skills and confidence in dealing with mental health and wellbeing at work.

Get in contact with the Workplace Team gram.hwl@nhs.scot for further information.

- NHS Grampian Listening service [Click to access The Listening Service.](#)
- Mental health first aiders (MHFA) play a crucial role in supporting employee wellbeing by recognising and responding to mental health challenges in the workplace. Mental health first aiders are trained colleagues who can identify early signs of mental distress and provide immediate support to colleagues. Their key responsibilities include:
 - Recognising signs of distress: MHFAiders are trained to spot early indicators of mental health issues, such as changes in behavior or mood.
 - Initiating supportive conversations: They engage in compassionate discussions with employees who may be struggling, offering a listening ear without judgment.

- Action for Happiness - A UK based charitable movement focused on creating a happier and kinder world. The website helps bring people together to learn evidence based skills for happier living, promotes daily practical actions, and encourages a culture of kindness and wellbeing. The organisation is nonpolitical, nonreligious, and welcomes people from all backgrounds. Its mission centres on helping individuals and communities boost wellbeing, strengthen social connection, and take small steps that make a positive difference.
<https://actionforhappiness.org/about-us>
Founded in 2010, Action for Happiness provides resources such as the “Ten Keys to Happier Living”, monthly wellbeing calendars, community groups, and courses that are grounded in the science of wellbeing. It has grown into a global movement with hundreds of thousands of members.

This publication is available in other languages and formats on request. Please call Health Information Resources Service on 01224 558504 or email: gram.resources@nhs.scot

Ask for publication MVC 260