

1. Introduction

In this guide we will try to give you an understanding of why wellbeing is important, how to spot signs of someone who is in a poor state of wellbeing, how to support, and signpost you to resources that may help.

In this early part of the toolkit, we will be using wellbeing as an umbrella term that encompasses all areas of wellbeing such as physical and mental wellbeing. As we go through the guide, we will talk about more specific areas of wellbeing in more detail.

What do we mean by wellbeing?

The Oxford Dictionary defines wellbeing as “*the state of being healthy, happy, or prosperous; physical, psychological, or moral welfare.*”

In an organisation, we can consider all these things, plus job satisfaction and relationships with others, as having an impact on our general wellbeing. When people are in a good state of wellbeing and managing it well, they will be more confident about themselves, their work, and their relationships. On the flip side, if they are in a poor state of wellbeing and are not managing it well confidence will be low, and work and relationships will suffer.

How can we tell if someone is in a poor state of wellbeing?

Identifying if someone is in a good or poor state of wellbeing will vary from person to person, but these are some common signs that will hopefully help you to identify.



Low Mood

Look out for a change in a person's mood, they may seem sad, worried, tearful, or withdrawn.

Poor Concentration

People in a poor state of wellbeing may lack focus, be easily distracted, or perform poorly. Look out for changes in focus and performance.



Short Tempered

People in a poor state of wellbeing may struggle to look after themselves physically & emotionally. This can leave them feeling stressed and with an overall feeling of being overwhelmed leading to being short tempered.

Negative Words

This is linked to low mood, as a person having a low mood can lead to them having negative thoughts about themselves or their life and this makes it hard for them to see the positives.



2. Mental Health

Everyone's experience of mental health is different, however, whilst symptoms can vary there are some common signs that can indicate if someone is struggling. The table below is a shortened version from [Minds Guide for Small Businesses](#) and gives us some guidance on signs. The key indicator is the change in a person's typical behaviour.

Physical signs	Psychological signs	Behavioural signs	Workplace specific examples
Frequent headaches or stomach upsets	Anxiety or distress	Increased smoking and drinking	Increased errors, missing deadlines or forgetting tasks
Suffering from frequent minor illnesses including joint and back pain	Indecision or an inability to concentrate	Being withdrawn, not participating in conversations or social activities	Becoming fixated with fair treatment and quick to use grievance procedures
Difficulty sleeping or ongoing tiredness	Feeling low	Uncharacteristic risk-taking	Taking on too much work and volunteering for every new project
Feeling run-down	Changes in mood	Restlessness	Reduced or inconsistent performance
Lack of care over appearance	Difficulty taking information in	Irritability, anger or aggression	Apparent over-reaction to issues

Conversation starters for Mental Health

It can be hard starting conversations about mental health, but spotting the signs of someone in a poor state of mental health and showing concern can be really impactful.

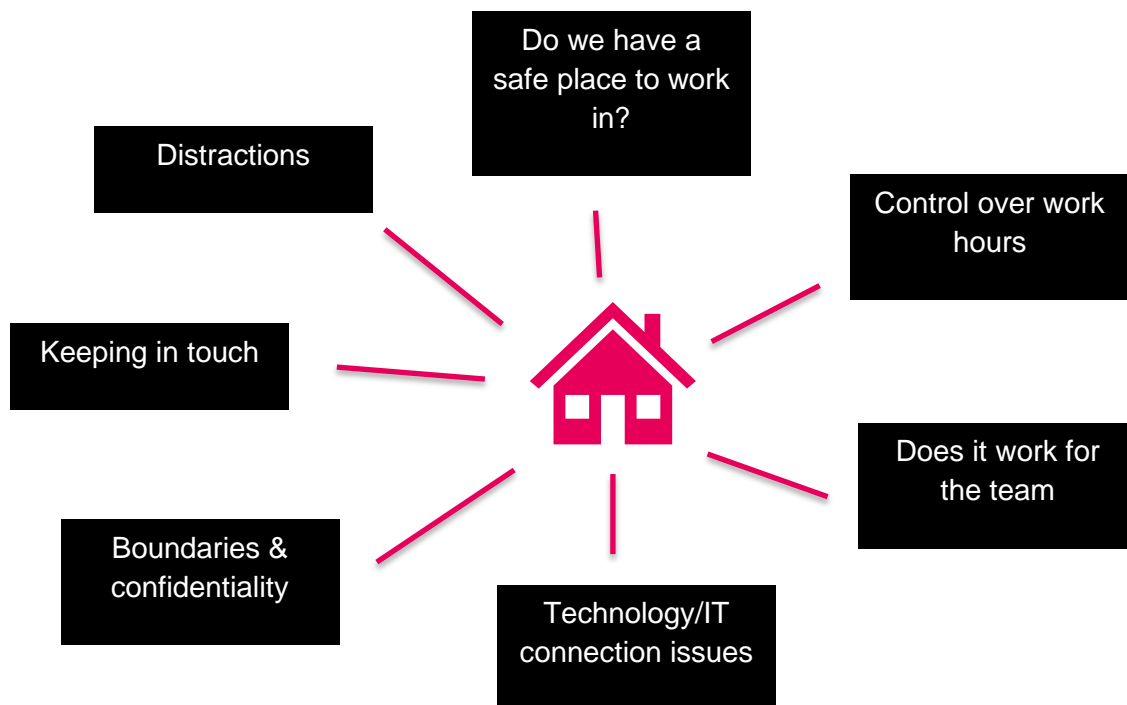
Facilitating the conversation	Questions to ask	Questions to avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Avoid interruptions – ensure colleagues can't walk in and interrupt. ○ Ask simple, open, non-judgemental questions. ○ Speak Calmly. ○ Listen actively and carefully. ○ Focus on the person, not the problem. ○ Avoid making assumptions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How are you doing at the moment? ○ You seem to be a bit down/upset/frustrated. Is everything ok? ○ I've noticed that you've been arriving late recently, and I wondered if you're ok? ○ Is there anything I can do to help? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You're clearly struggling. What's up? ○ Why can't you just get your act together? ○ What do you expect me to do about it? ○ Your performance is really unacceptable right now – what's going on?

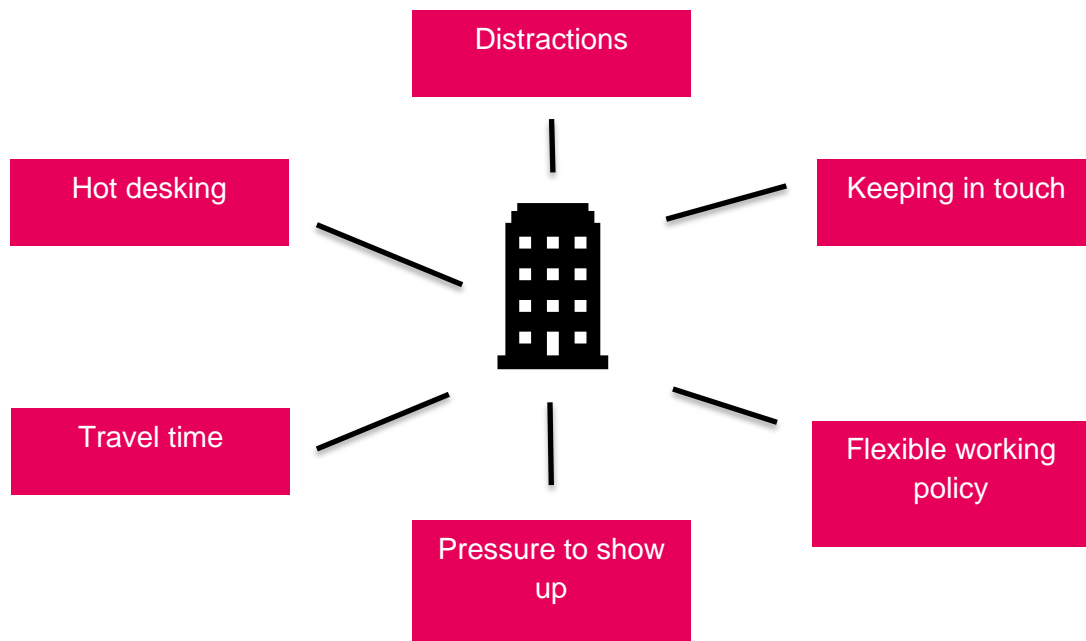
The guide in which this information come from [Minds Guide for Small Businesses is very useful and is well worth referring to, as there is more information not covered here.](#)

3. Hybrid Working and how to support Mental Health and Wellbeing

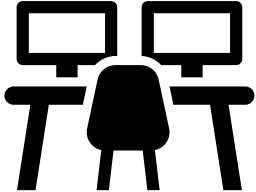
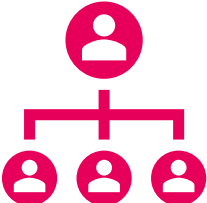
During the pandemic many of us had to work virtually, usually from home. Since coming out of those Covid procedures many of us have taken up hybrid working, where we work part of our time at home and the other part at the office. Although this way of working does have many benefits in terms of flexible working and work-life balance, it can cause issues for people and effect wellbeing. In this next section we are going to look things to consider in hybrid way working and how to support your team in a hybrid environment.

Things to consider





Supporting people when working in a Hybrid way

<p><u>Good Practice for Hybrid Working</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Investment in relationships ✓ Open and flexible communication ✓ Understanding and kindness ✓ Distinct role boundaries ✓ Clear start and finish times ✓ Regular screen breaks 	
	<p><u>Good Practice for Managers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Regular contact ✓ Leading by example ✓ Sharing ideas for wellbeing ✓ Regular reviews of workload and practice ✓ Promoting activities and resources that support wellbeing

Potential challenges of Hybrid Working



Ensuring a Safe Working Environment

Not everyone has an appropriate workstation at home and may not have the correct equipment to support any health needs or just basic health & safety. Not everyone has a safe home environment, try to be flexible with numbers of days at home and the office.

Digital Presenteeism

Digital presenteeism is “when you feel under pressure to always be available online, via video calls, phone, email, or chat. It’s when you’ve done a full day’s work but feel pressure to log on or reply later than your normal or preferred working patterns, even if you feel exhausted or unwell.”



Work-Home Balance

This is the amount of time we spend doing our job versus the amount of time we spend at home with loved ones and pursuing hobbies. Hybrid working has made this difficult for people, as home has now become a place of work and makes it hard to switch off or define where home starts and work ends.

Boundaries

Similar to digital presenteeism and work-home balance, setting boundaries is around this idea of connectivity doesn’t mean availability. Just because we can contact people at any time doesn’t mean we should. Some people will have problems setting boundaries and as leaders we should lead by example.



Isolation and Fear of Missing Out

It is easy for those employees that work more at home to feel left out and isolated from the team. This can cause anxiety and stress as some people may feel like they are missing out.

Rapidly Changing Work Environment

The speed in which workplaces had to adapt to hybrid working would have been difficult for some people. Even since the end of the pandemic, employers are still going through big changes at a fast pace and a lot of this effects how people work and the technology they use.



Stressors

This refers to a situation that causes us to feel stressed. With hybrid working we have the potential to come to contact with more stressors due to the home and office spilt. All of the above challenges could act as a stressor for people.

4. Stress in the Workplace

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as *'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'*

Learning to manage stress is important, because if someone experiences high levels of stress often for a period of time it can lead to mental health problems like anxiety and depression.

The Health and Safety Executive has identified 6 main areas of work which can affect stress levels.



Demands

This can include workload, work pattern and environment



Control

How much say does someone have in the way they work



Support

Does the person have a line manager and colleagues that encourage and develop the person



Relationships

Promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour



Role

Does the employee understand their role within the organisation, is there cross over or conflict with other roles?



Change

How well is change, of any size, communicated and managed

To help identify, assess, and manage these six areas, employers can use a stress risk assessment. This can help identify what stressors already exist and what you are already

doing to address them, it may also help identify things you hadn't considered. A template from HSE can be found [here](#).

5. Resources

There are so many resources that you can direct people to help them on their wellbeing journey. Below is a bank of resources that can be helpful to many different people at various stages of wellbeing. Most of these resources will take you to third party sites, usually charities, who are specialists in wellbeing and mental health.

Crisis and Immediate Support	<p>These are the resources we encourage students to use if they are at risk to themselves (e.g. suicidality, self-harm, etc.). All external services to NTU.</p> <p>In-person safety services for urgent mental health support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nottingham A&E Service or search for your local A&E here • Call 999 in an emergency situation which needs an immediate response – especially if you cannot travel to A&E • Crisis Sanctuaries - Framework Housing Association (frameworkha.org) • Urgent Care Centre (Walk-In Centre) or search for your local centres here
GP Support	<p>Nottinghamshire Talking therapies is a free and confidential NHS service designed to help with common mental health problems such as stress, anxiety and depression. Anyone aged 18 years or over and registered with a GP can access support, though a GP referral is not necessary as you can self-refer.</p> <p>If someone has had ongoing concerns about their mental or physical health, they need to make an appointment with their GP to discuss any possible diagnoses and treatment options. They could use this helpful interactive guide which can help them to understand options and prepare a checklist before their appointment of things they might like to say to or ask the GP.</p> <p>See NTU Health Centres for contact details of Nottingham-based GP surgeries.</p> <p>If your GP is out of the Nottingham City/Nottinghamshire County/Bassetlaw area, please follow this link to an NHS webpage where you can search for the NHS counselling service attached to your GP's address: Find an NHS talking therapies services - NHS (www.nhs.uk)</p>

Phone/Text Services for Mental Health Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS 111 phone line • Samaritans phone line (24/7) • Wellness in Mind phone line (9am-12am) • Free, 24/7 mental health text support in the UK Shout 85258 (giveusashout.org)
Online Support and Apps for Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tomorrow Project (help for anyone affected by suicide) • Tips for coping with urges to self-harm right now - Mind • StayAlive - Essential suicide prevention for everyday life – app for those experiencing suicidal thoughts • Where to get help for self-harm - NHS (www.nhs.uk) • https://harmless.org.uk/

Resources for placement students

It is worth remembering that if you have a placement student working with you and you are concerned about their wellbeing or they have raised concerns to you, they can access all NTU's Student Support Services as they are still enrolled at the university. Below are some ways the university can support a placement student.

NTU Counselling	Our NTU Counselling Service can offer up to 4 sessions if needed. Sessions can be offered via MS teams, or in-person (there is a slightly longer wait for these).
Pastoral Support	The NTU Chaplaincy service can offer personal (pastoral) support to students who are struggling with bereavement, family or relationship difficulties and other personal issues. They can support students with religious faith and none and are able to support you for as long as you need. To get in touch with them email faith@ntu.ac.uk and richard.davey@ntu.ac.uk .
NTU Silver Cloud (self-help)	Please follow this link to NTU SilverCloud which provides instant online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) -based support for many mental health symptoms. CBT is an effective technique to help challenge and change negative thinking patterns and behaviours. Each programme takes a modular approach and contains text, video, exercises and audio clips and activities and quizzes. Please see below list of different programs available:

Space from Health Anxiety, Space from Stress, Space in Lung Conditions from Depression & Anxiety, Space for Mindfulness, Space from Panic, Space for Perinatal Wellbeing, Space from Social Anxiety, Space for Positive Body Image, Space for Resilience, Space from COVID-19, Space in Diabetes from Depression & Anxiety, Space from Depression, Space for Sleep, Space from Money Worries, Space in Chronic Pain from Depression & Anxiety, Space from Phobia, Space from GAD, Space in CHD from Depression & Anxiety, Space from Depression & Anxiety, Space from OCD