

We Care Newsletter – October 2021

Whether it's been caring for patients and all the challenges that brings, being redeployed, financial concerns, limited time for rest due to work demands or worrying about family and friends being isolated or contracting covid 19; we have all been impacted in one way or another over the past eighteen months by the pandemic, and for many, this continues to be the case.

We Care is here to listen to your views which guide us on further developing our staff wellbeing support as a central aspect in all teams and workplaces. To do this we are always looking at ways in which wellbeing can be integrated into your work life and teams – from team meetings, passing a colleague in the corridor, appraisals and informal check ins, wellbeing training and workshops.

Staff responses have been bursting with things you would like to see from We Care. Thank you for your responses and we are tailoring future pieces to meet the suggestions given.

**We are not all in the same boat...
We are all in the same storm.**

- Damian Barr, British Writer

Meet the We Care Team – The Psychologists



Hello, I am Kelsea Stewart and I joined NHS Grampian as an Assistant Psychologist in staff support in March 2021. Before this, I worked with older adults and individuals with mental health concerns in the community and care setting. During the start of the pandemic I worked as a therapy assistant, where my role that previously relied on sensory stimulation and meaningful communication, suddenly involved social distancing and three day sanitisation. I saw first-hand the impact this had on the staff around me and while there was so much uncertainty and fear during that time I am proud of how our team came together to support each other. I regularly supported meal times, bathroom trips and family visits once we were able to open our doors again. When I joined NHS Grampian I was due to support staff recovery however since we were hit by another wave my role had to adapt and support staff through the Psychological Resilience Hub and in developing team support.

Having officially joined the We Care team in August I am excited to share the resources we are developing in the background. My focus so far has been on setting up feedback pathways, evaluation of our training and developing some training and information sessions to be available soon.

Hello, I am Emma Hepburn and I am a clinical psychologist that trained in Glasgow and have now worked in NHS Grampian for over 14 years. I have worked as a clinical psychologist in a range of areas including children and families, maternity and neonatology, stroke and neuropsychology. Latterly during the pandemic, I have worked in staff support in the acute sector. I also lecture at Aberdeen University in mental health and wellbeing at work and the psychology of wellbeing and write books about how people can look after their wellbeing and mental health proactively.

I have always been interested in wellbeing at work as the research shows this improves staff and patient experience and outcomes as well as work related factors, including innovation, motivation and staff retention. In my role as We Care Programme lead I hope to help contribute to wellbeing and the context that enables wellbeing so this becomes a central part of our working lives and considered essential to our roles.



Working during the pandemic – On-site vs From Home

For this newsletter we interviewed two staff members to gain an insight into their experience, thoughts and feelings about remote and on site working during the pandemic. We thank Krzysztof and Caroline for their time and honesty on their experience and views.

Krzysztof has worked as a domestic assistant for 7 years. During the first wave, Krzysztof worked on site in the medical specialities and infection unit wards.

Caroline has worked as Chief Executive of NHS Grampian since November 2020 after qualifying as a nurse over 30 years ago. Caroline has mainly worked from home during the pandemic.

What was the best things about working on site/from home?

I felt very much part of the team. The senior charge nurse was amazing at keeping the staff well informed of any changes happening during the pandemic. The training I received helped me survive covid and I am extremely grateful for it. I never feel like “only” the domestic and the doctors and consultants will ask for assistance with translation if necessary.

Wearing slippers, not having to commute, access to a decent coffee machine, flexibility to manage home and work demands with fewer distractions most of the time. Prior to the pandemic I had to do a lot of national and regional travel for work whereas now I can take part in these meetings from home which is better financially and ecologically. It has also created more time for me as I have less commuting to do.

What might you miss if you weren't able to work on site?

The people and conversation is what makes the job. Communication is so good on the ward. Working is good for my mental health as I am able to interact with others.

I would miss the informal stuff, laughing and talking with other members of staff. I have enjoyed having the time to be able to visit colleagues in their own environments as this has enabled me to keep it real.

What wellbeing impact has working on site/from home had?

If I was to think too much about covid I would overthink things. It feels like nothing much has changed within the workplace and I am very aware of how to protect myself from the risk of covid.

I felt ok but sometimes felt disconnected and had to make a conscious effort to leave the house after work to enable me to switch off. I have dogs, who have enjoyed having me around however the family sometimes get annoyed at being told to be quiet.

Is there anything further to help you continue to work effectively on site?

Communication was so good with the senior charge nurse and the consultants that I feel happy and appreciated on my floor however sometimes I feel a sense of inequality within the team

The choice to work flexibly and to be in control of that choice as far as possible. I think some sort of hybrid will be best. The ability to have a system where some people can be on teams and others in person. It must be better than the previous video conferencing, continued virtual IT support and kit – that is essential. Our approach to this has to be person centred.

Did You Know?

1 in 3

One in three NHS Staff have felt unwell due to work-related stress.



NHS Staff and Learners' Mental Wellbeing Commission (2019) Health Education England

What do you think is the greatest concern to staff who are working on site?

It would vary depending on where they worked. My greatest concern is how we are going to make the best of what we have learned about the benefits and challenges as it is different for everyone.

Getting out and about in Grampian

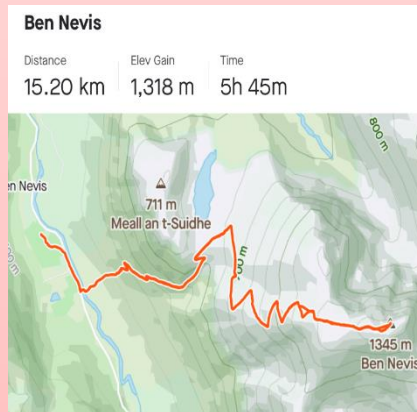
As we are moving into the winter months it's important to get out and about while the weather is still nice.

Visit Aberdeen have a great link of nice walks in and around Aberdeen & Shire

<https://www.visitabdn.com/what-to-do/great-outdoors/walking/>

If you want to go further afield like our very own Fiona, and climb the tallest mountain in Great Britain, Ben Nevis. The summit sits at 1345m above sea level and was a massive volcano which imploded on itself.

<https://www.visitscotland.com/see-do/iconic-scotland/ben-nevis/>



Why not try the lighthouse trail before the 17th of October and find the 50 lighthouses, painted by professional artists, in a variety of locations in and around Aberdeen/ Shire/ Orkney and Shetland. Check out the ones we have found in our team – have you found anymore? Let us know on our social media with #GrampianWeCare

<https://www.lighththenorth.co.uk/>



What's On

October

[7th 8am - 8:30am Guided Journaling](#)

[13th 10am – 1pm Promoting resilience in the workplace for supervisors and managers](#)

[14th 1pm – 4pm Recovery in Mental Health](#)

[14th 8am - 8:30am Guided Journaling](#)

[20th 5pm - 5:30pm Guided Journaling](#)

[21st 8am - 8:30am Guided Journaling](#)

[26th 7:30am - 8am Guided Journaling](#)

[28th 10am - 11:30am Mental Health Awareness](#)

[28th 8am - 8:30am Guided Journaling](#)

November

[3rd 1pm – 4pm Mental Healthy Workplace Training for managers](#)

[3rd 9am-12:30am – Understanding, developing and maintaining your personal resilience](#)

[4th 8am - 8:30am Guided Journaling](#)

[9th 10am – 11:30am Stress Awareness](#)

[11th 8am - 8:30am Guided Journaling](#)

[16th 10am – 11am Listening Ear](#)

[18th 8am - 8:30am Guided Journaling](#)

[23rd 9am-12:30am – Understanding, developing and maintaining your personal resilience](#)

[25th 8am - 8:30am Guided Journaling](#)

[25th 10am - 11:30am Mental Health Awareness](#)

To register for any of the above sessions please click the name and you will be taken to our [We Care Turas](#) page.

To register for Turas please click [this page](#).

To book a Values Based Reflective Practice Taster session or to find out more please contact Sue Rayner susan.rayner1@nhs.scot

Contact Us

We would love to hear your feedback and suggestions about what matters to you.

You can do this via our email address gram.wecare@nhs.scot,

our anonymous form at: <https://forms.office.com/r/xgrcdtqKQg> or by scanning the QR code,

or by our social media and using the #GrampianWeCare



@GrampianWeCare



Are you getting 1% for yourself?

With time being such a precious resource in our work, we often struggle to know how much time to dedicate to different tasks. We know that our colleagues are aware of making time for self-care but without having designated times it can often be replaced with another piece of work.

At a recent talk we attended a speaker discussed how much time is enough for wellbeing. He suggested we start with 1% - because surely our employer can dedicate 1% to our wellbeing and we can prioritise this 1% for ourselves too.

1% of your work life equates to:

5 minutes a day
22.5 minutes a week
1.5 hours a month
18 hours a year



How have you used your 1%?

Look back on the last year and ask yourself:
Have I dedicated 1% of my work time to myself?

World Mental Health Day 10th October

Mental health can fluctuate along a spectrum in the same way that physical health does and there may be times when it is better than others. Mental health concerns should be supported in the same, honest and consistent way that physical health concerns are.

Factors that affect mental wellbeing in staff are



Finding confidence to discuss mental health problems



Fear of being judged



Stress



Stigma that mental health problems are seen as a weakness

NHS Staff and Learners' Mental Wellbeing Commission (2019) Health Education England

Here are five practical ways you can look after your mental health while at work:

1. Keep active – Even 5 minutes away from your desk every hour is beneficial for your wellbeing
2. Keep in touch – Schedule a coffee break with your team with a “no work rule”
3. Ask for help – Talk through stressors and difficulties with a trusted person
4. Make sure you take your breaks
5. Remember to reflect on what went well in your day

More information on World Mental Health day can be found here: [World Mental Health Day 2021 \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/world-mental-health-day)

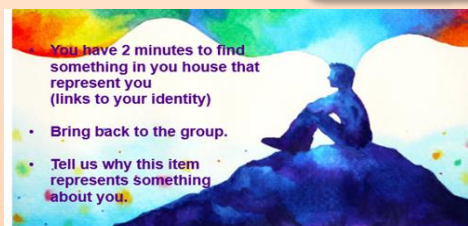
Team Building Ideas

Last month we put out a request for any team building ideas that you have tried in your team. We have picked three to share with you and inspire how you can include team building activities into your teams:



One minute masterpiece

Pair team members pair up and have 1 minute to draw a portrait of their colleague without looking at the paper.
Show off your Picasso attempts!



Show and tell

Ask everyone to take 2 minutes to find something in their house that represents them and bring it back to the group. Each team member takes it in turns to tell us why this item represents something about them.



Wellbeing Champion

The podiatry team in Aberdeenshire have their own “walking talking Alexa” who has helped advocate for amazing wellbeing initiatives such as wellbeing Friday and signposting.

We will be sharing more information through our weekly brief and looking at how We Care can support a similar approach across teams.

Staff morale and team spirit is all about bring people together, helping them to get to know each other and connect making them feel comfortable and accepted within the team dynamics so activities that promote a few nuggets of information about each other or simply make you laugh together can be the start of something wonderful. You don't need to have huge amounts of time whether you have 5 minutes or 15 why not integrate a team building activity into your teams' week.