

Promoting mental wellbeing at work overview

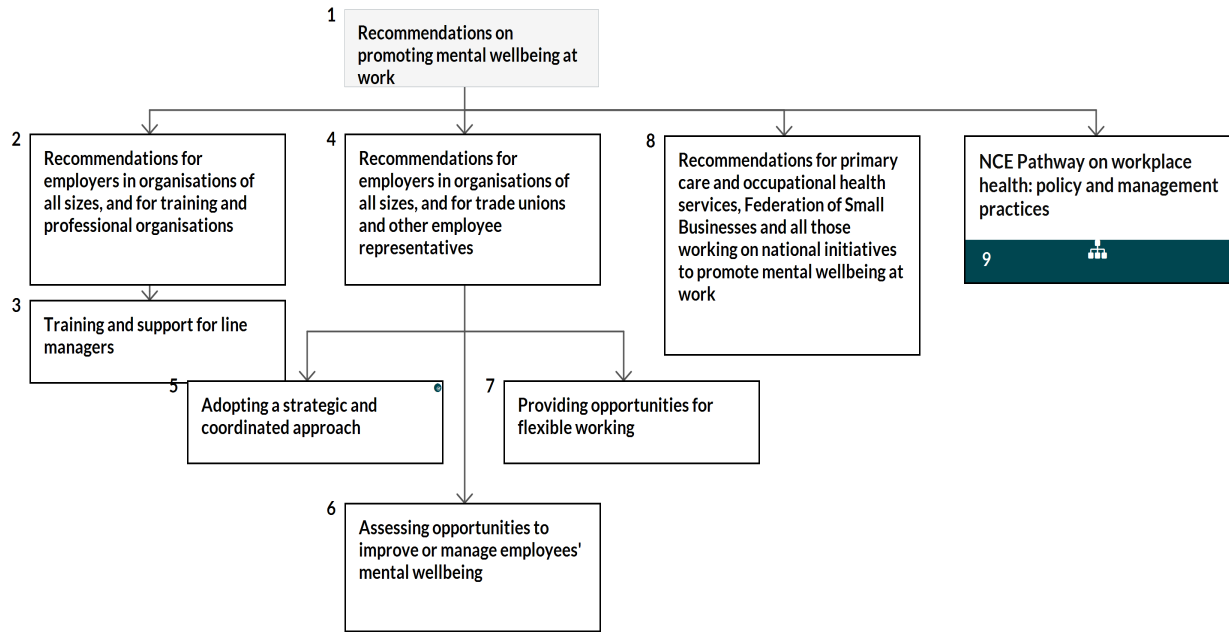
NICE Pathways bring together everything NICE says on a topic in an interactive flowchart. NICE Pathways are interactive and designed to be used online.

They are updated regularly as new NICE guidance is published. To view the latest version of this NICE Pathway see:

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/promoting-mental-wellbeing-at-work>

NICE Pathway last updated: 05 November 2020

This document contains a single flowchart and uses numbering to link the boxes to the associated recommendations.



1 Recommendations on promoting mental wellbeing at work

No additional information

2 Recommendations for employers in organisations of all sizes, and for training and professional organisations

Generally, these recommendations are for:

- chief executives and board members, human resources directors and senior managers in larger organisations
- business managers in medium-sized businesses
- owner-managers in micro and small businesses
- training and professional organisations.

3 Training and support for line managers

Strengthen the role of line managers¹ in promoting the mental wellbeing [See page 8] of employees through supportive leadership style and management practices. This will involve:

- promoting a management style that encourages participation, delegation, constructive feedback, mentoring and coaching
- ensuring policies for the recruitment, selection, training and development of managers recognise and promote these skills
- ensuring managers are able to motivate employees and provide them with the training and support they need to develop their performance and job satisfaction
- increasing understanding of how management style and practices can help to promote the mental wellbeing of employees and keep their stress to a minimum
- ensuring managers are able to identify and respond with sensitivity to employees' emotional concerns, and symptoms of mental health problems
- ensuring managers understand when it is necessary to refer an employee to occupational health services or other sources of help and support
- considering the competency framework developed by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, the Health and Safety Executive and Investors in People as a tool for management development².

4 Recommendations for employers in organisations of all sizes, and for

¹ The line manager may be the owner-manager in micro and small businesses.

² Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Health and Safety Executive, Investors in People (2009) Line management behaviour and stress at work.

trade unions and other employee representatives

Generally, these recommendations are for:

- chief executives and board members, human resources directors and senior managers in larger organisations
- business managers in medium-sized businesses
- owner-managers in micro and small businesses
- trade unions and other employee representatives.

5 Adopting a strategic and coordinated approach

- Adopt an organisation-wide approach to promoting the [mental wellbeing](#) [See page 8] of all employees, working in partnership with them. This approach should integrate the promotion of mental wellbeing into all policies and practices concerned with managing people, including those related to employment rights and working conditions.
- Ensure that the approach takes account of the nature of the work, the workforce and the characteristics of the organisation.
- Promote a culture of participation, equality and fairness that is based on open communication and inclusion.
- Create an awareness and understanding of mental wellbeing and reduce the potential for discrimination and stigma related to mental health problems.
- Ensure processes for job design, selection, recruitment, training, development and appraisal promote mental wellbeing and reduce the potential for stigma and discrimination. Employees should have the necessary skills and support to meet the demands of a job that is worthwhile and offers opportunities for development and progression. Employees should be fully supported throughout organisational change and situations of uncertainty.
- Ensure that groups of employees who might be exposed to stress but might be less likely to be included in the various approaches for promoting mental wellbeing have the equity of opportunity to participate. These groups include part-time workers, shift workers and migrant workers.

Quality standards

The following quality statements are relevant to this part of the interactive flowchart.

1. Making health and wellbeing an organisational priority
3. Identifying and managing stress

6 Assessing opportunities to improve or manage employees' mental wellbeing

Adopt a structured approach to assessing opportunities for promoting employees' mental wellbeing [See page 8] and managing risks. This involves:

- Ensuring systems are in place for assessing and monitoring the mental wellbeing of employees so that areas for improvement can be identified and risks caused by work and working conditions addressed. This could include using employee attitude surveys and information about absence rates, staff turnover and investment in training and development, and providing feedback and open communication. In small organisations, systems may be more informal. It is important to protect employee confidentiality and address any concerns employees might have about these processes of assessment and monitoring.
- Making employees aware of their legal entitlements regarding quality of work and working conditions. Employees should be made aware of their responsibilities for looking after their own mental wellbeing. For example, employees need to identify concerns and needs relating to support or improvements in the working environment.
- Using frameworks such as Health and Safety Executive management standards for work-related stress to promote and protect employee mental wellbeing.
- Responding to the needs of employees who may be at particular risk of stress caused by work and working conditions, or who may be experiencing mental health problems for other reasons. Well implemented policies for managing employee absence are important for ensuring that employees who are experiencing stress can be identified early and offered support. Support could include counselling or stress management training provided through occupational health and primary care support services. Interventions for individual employees should be complemented by organisation-wide approaches that encompass all employees.

Different approaches may be needed by micro, small and medium-sized businesses and organisations for promoting mental wellbeing and managing risks. Smaller businesses and organisations may need to access the support provided by organisations such as the Federation of Small Business and chambers of commerce. Employers may also wish to refer to what NICE says on managing long-term sickness absence and capability to work.

7 Providing opportunities for flexible working

- If reasonably practical, provide employees with opportunities for flexible working according to their needs and aspirations in both their personal and working lives. Different options for flexible working include part-time working, home-working, job sharing and flexitime. Such opportunities can enhance employees' sense of control and promote engagement and job satisfaction.

- Promote a culture within the organisation that supports flexible working and addresses employees' concerns. Managers should respond to and seek to accommodate appropriate requests from employees for flexible working and should ensure consistency and fairness in processing applications. Managers' ability to manage teams with flexible working patterns may need to be developed.
- Consider particular models of flexible working that recognise the distinct characteristics of micro, small and medium-sized businesses and organisations.

8 Recommendations for primary care and occupational health services, Federation of Small Businesses and all those working on national initiatives to promote mental wellbeing at work

Collaborate with micro, small and medium-sized businesses and offer advice and a range of support and services. This could include access to occupational health services (including counselling support and stress management training).

Establish mechanisms for providing support and advice on developing and implementing organisation-wide approaches to promoting [mental wellbeing](#) [See page 8]. These could include tools and approaches for risk assessment, human resources management and management training and development.

9 NCE Pathway on workplace health: policy and management practices

[See Workplace health: policy and management practices](#)

The following definition of mental wellbeing is used in this guidance:

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 society¹.

Mental wellbeing at work is determined by the interaction between the working environment, the nature of the work and the individual.

Glossary

Work-related stress

(work-related stress is defined as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them'²)

Micro, small and medium-sized businesses

(a micro business employs fewer than 10 people: a small business employs fewer than 50 people and a medium-sized business employs fewer than 250 people)

Micro and small businesses

(a micro business employs fewer than 10 people: a small business employs fewer than 50 people and a medium-sized business employs fewer than 250 people)

Sources

[Mental wellbeing at work](#) (2009) NICE guideline PH22

¹ Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008) Final project report. London: The Government Office for Science

² Health and Safety Executive (2004) [Working together to reduce stress at work: a guide for employees](#).

Your responsibility

Guidelines

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service. It is not mandatory to apply the recommendations, and the guideline does not override the responsibility to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

Local commissioners and providers of healthcare have a responsibility to enable the guideline to be applied when individual professionals and people using services wish to use it. They should do so in the context of local and national priorities for funding and developing services, and in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities. Nothing in this guideline should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with complying with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

Technology appraisals

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, health professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients. The application of the recommendations in this interactive flowchart is at the discretion of health professionals and their individual patients and do not override the responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or their carer or guardian.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to provide the funding required to enable the recommendations to be applied when individual health professionals and their patients wish to use it, in accordance with the NHS Constitution. They should do so in light of their duties to

have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

Medical technologies guidance, diagnostics guidance and interventional procedures guidance

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, healthcare professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account. However, the interactive flowchart does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to implement the recommendations, in their local context, in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Nothing in this interactive flowchart should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.