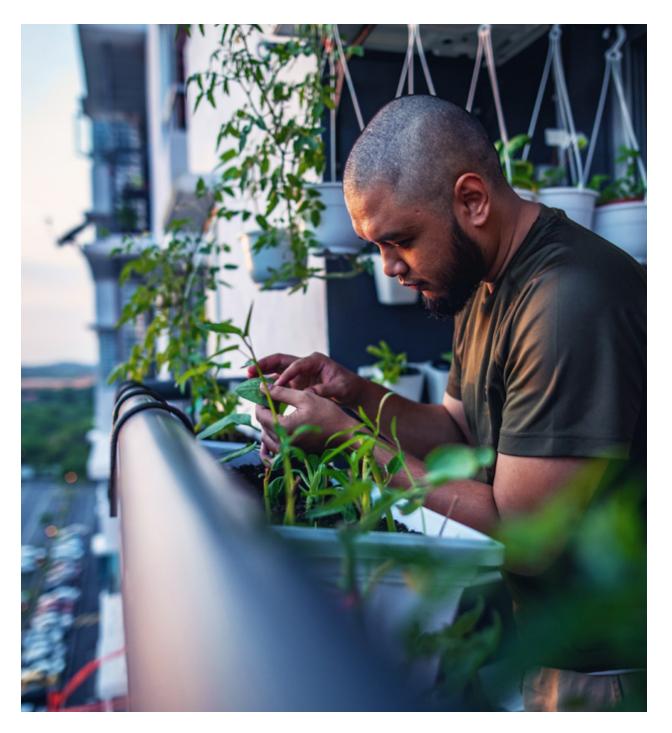


Wellbeing toolkit for small businesses

Contents

Welcome to the wellbeing toolkit	3
The five drivers of wellbeing	4
What can I do and where do I start?	7
COVID-19 specific	9
Things to think about	9
What to do if you need more assistance or help	9
The emerging health and wellbeing	11
Additional support	18
Additional resources	19



Welcome to the wellbeing toolkit

The wellbeing of our colleagues is important. And we know that supporting and working with them to improve their wellbeing is important too. That's where this toolkit comes in. It's here to help SMEs look after their own and their staff's wellbeing. The disruption from the pandemic has left many small businesses and employees struggling emotionally, as well as financially. Our recent research with Small **Business Britain highlighted** that 20% of small businesses felt they needed mental health support.

The mental health and physical wellbeing of our employees is always our first priority. Throughout the coronavirus crisis, we focused on increasing awareness around best practice and bringing our colleagues a range of support. And now, our expertise around best practice is being extended to small businesses to help them work their way through

the challenges
being thrown
at them. This
wellbeing toolkit
is specifically
for small
businesses, to
provide them
with hints, tips
and give them
access to a
range of free resources.

Wellbeing is about 'how we're doing' as individuals, communities and as a nation.

Personal wellbeing is how satisfied we are with our lives, our sense that what we do in life is worthwhile, our day-to-day emotional experiences (happiness and anxiety) and our wider mental wellbeing. The five ways

to wellbeing (connect, be active, take notice, keep learning, and give) can help us manage and improve our personal wellbeing.

Wellbeing is driven by so many factors, including our health, security, relationships, environment and purpose. We call these the five drivers to wellbeing. Wellbeing is more than

> just health all elements contribute and affect each other, and the way we work probably impacts on all of them.

Lockdown has been

tough on all of us both physically and mentally. Many people have been furloughed, remained in the workplace, or have been managing family or caring responsibilities while trying to work from home. Some are also struggling financially as a direct result of the impact of COVID-19 on their business or workplace. In some cases people who have never felt or have been vulnerable before are now

experiencing a level of uncertainty that is new to them. Some are feeling the ongoing effects of ill health, be it directly related to COVID, or managing their mental and physical health during challenging times.

With restrictions lifting at different speeds and in different ways across the world, and with the situation remaining extremely fluid, it's important to remember that life isn't quite returning to how it was before the pandemic and its impact on people is far from over.

As employers, we have a legal and moral duty to address any work-related issues affecting our people and a responsibility to support them through difficulties in their lives outside work. That's the right thing to do as well as being good for business – and we want to offer similar support and advice to the UK's small businesses.



The five drivers of wellbeing

Employers can drive and support the wellbeing of their employees.

We align to the 'five drivers of wellbeing' developed by the What Works Centre for Wellbeing.

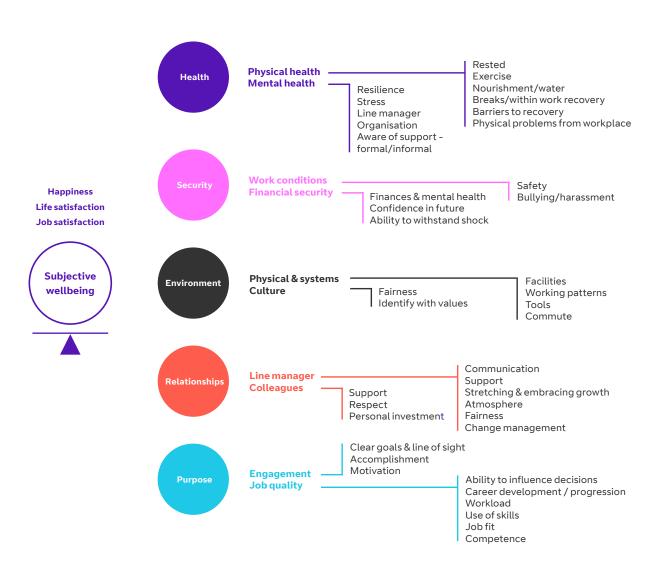
Health

We all have a part to play in promoting our own health and wellbeing. Employers have a role in creating a culture, climate and working conditions that enable their people to make healthy choices and to flourish.

Managers need to know their people. They need to support them to promote good health, identify and manage early signs of ill health and point them in the right direction for advice and services that help them stay in work or return to work after sickness.

We all need to keep ourselves as fit and healthy as we can, act early if we feel unwell and make best use of the information and services available to us that helps our recovery.

- Check out the One You website to help you get healthier and feel better with free tips, tools and support.
- Healthtalk (via a charity organisation) offers free, reliable information about health issues by sharing peoples' reallife experiences there are about 90 different topics including dealing with cancer, autism, motor-neurone disease, pregnancy, drugs and depression.







Security

Our employer's efforts to give us a secure and safe working environment, together with how secure we feel at work, have a significant impact on our wellbeing. Security encompasses our physical safety at work; our working conditions; our employment status and assurance; and our perceived financial stability. There are a handful of internal and external factors that can influence each of these things too. So we all have a role in promotion positive safety and security.

Safety - The most important thing we have to do is make sure our people are always safe. Remember, employers and their people have moral and legal responsibilities to work safely. And it's up to employers to set out the minimum standards for all aspects of health and safety as well as explaining how to put it into practice. Plus, they've got to make the health and safety framework clear to their employees so they know their safety is ensured. It's important that employees understand the roles and responsibilities, basic principles and risk management process that you have in place underpinning everything that you do.

The Health and Safety Executive
(HSE) provides help and information to
keep people safe and healthy at work.
One of your main responsibilities as an
employer is to make sure all employees
are following guidelines, including
those relating to manual handling,
working safely with display screen
equipment, stress at work and
musculoskeletal disorders.

Financial - 'Financial security' refers to the peace of mind that we feel when we're not worried about our income being enough to cover our expenses. It changes over time and can be influenced by a wide range of internal (for example, feeling that your job is at risk, or increased cost of rent/mortgage), and external factors (for example, periods of national economic recession). Sometimes our financial security can cause anxiety or stress, and affect our state of wellbeing.

- The Money Advice Service offers free and impartial advice on a whole range of topics, from budgeting and managing money to renting or buying a home. It has webchat via their website, you can call on 0800 138 7777 or you can add +44 7701 342744 to your WhatsApp contacts and send a message (Monday to Friday, 8am 6pm, Saturday 8am 3pm, Sunday and Bank Holidays closed).
- <u>Citizen's advice</u> also offer free impartial advice to help you make the right choices. Take a look at its debt and money section.
- Healthtalk (via a charity organisation)
 gives advice and reassurance for you or
 someone you care about on topics such
 as making decisions about health and
 treatment, talking to friends and family,
 practical issues like money and travel,
 emotional wellbeing and impact on work
 or education.

Relationships

These include those in our personal and working lives, as well as those we have with our employer, employees, the organisations we work with and the wider community. All of these relationships can impact on how we feel, how we behave and our general wellbeing.

All of us, either as managers or individuals, have a key role in supporting and building strong, trusted, positive relationships in the workplace, dealing with situations fairly and decisively, as well as helping our employees find support in dealing with personal relationship issues.

Employers should promote healthy relationships for all their people within wider communities through volunteering, charity partnerships and key programmes.

Environment

When we talk about 'the environment' we often think about air quality, pollution in the seas and greenhouse gasses but it's also about things much closer to home.

Our environment is the space that we inhabit, physically and mentally. We all have basic needs of shelter, warmth and enough to eat and drink. If we don't have those things we feel miserable and eventually we will become ill.

Those material things are important but simply adding more of them over and above what is necessary doesn't make us happier and they aren't enough on their own.

Purpose

People with purpose like what they're doing and are motivated to achieve their goals. Their purpose will stem from their values: what drives them and what really matters to them.

There's a strong link between purpose and other aspects of wellbeing. A strong sense of purpose is more likely to lead to improved mental and physical health. Such individuals are more likely to be engaged with family, colleagues and the community, with a positive impact on the quality of relationships. Being secure enhances individuals' sense of purpose and engagement.

Employers should ensure that people have purposeful careers, where they make a positive difference. Employers get the best from their people if they believe in the company they work for. They'll be more likely to engage and demonstrate their commitment to their career, supporting colleagues, providing excellent customer service and making an impact in our communities if they have clear goals and understand the impact they're making.





What can I do and where do I start?

Your employees will help you decide where to start and what to do.

But only if you're prepared to listen. You've got to develop a culture within your company where having supportive and constructive conversations about mental health and wellbeing is always welcome. That'll help you identify wat needs to be done, while working with your employees to address issues and figure out solutions together.

Remember, for many people there are concerns, stresses, feelings and fears that didn't exist before lockdown. This means there are vulnerable people in your workplace who may have never felt vulnerable before. So, for many companies your approach to wellbeing will need to evolve to meet the changing needs of your people. Have a read of COVID-19 wellbeing emerging issues for insights into the issues your people may be facing.



Start by thinking about what you already know about the wellbeing of your workforce. And then ask employees returning to the workplace, adapting to the new norm and/or new ways of working, how they feel and what they need. This could include:

- Regular and effective comms on what's happening and how they're affected.
- Information on what's being done to provide COVID safe work environment and guidance on what they need to do.
- Equipment and/or training such as display screen equipment if they're working from home.
- Time to reintegrate into the work place and adapt to new ways of working.
- Consideration of personal needs such as challenges with childcare, care for people who are vulnerable.

- One-to-ones and supportive engagement with managers. It's important to note without an effective support network (which often includes managers and colleagues as well as family and friends) and where people are struggling to deal with the direct impact of COVID-19 they're much more likely to suffer with poor mental health.
- Access to additional support services such as an employee assistance programme or information on where to go for help. See section on additional support.
- Special consideration for employees who are in a higher risk group because of their health or caring responsibilities or who may be more vulnerable because of a disability or longterm mental health illness.

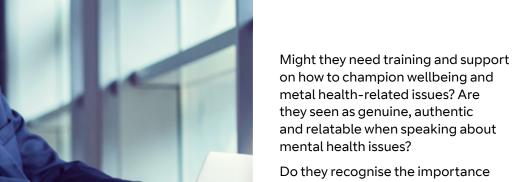


Some of these solutions won't cost money or take much time to set up. Others may need funds and take longer.

It's worth thinking about what your people are saying they need and what's achievable with the time and resources you have available. But what's very important is that you complete regular risk assessments of mental health, review and adapt your plans accordingly.

As well as asking your employees what they need, you might want to consider how effective your leadership team is.

Ask yourself: do your leaders, managers and supervisors have the necessary awareness, skills and attributes to support the wellbeing and the mental health of employees within your organisation?



Do they recognise the importance and value of improving the health, safety and wellbeing of your employees and do they make good role models by looking after themselves?

Do they recognise their role and responsibility in supporting employees, such as keeping in regular contact, managing remote workers in such a way that doesn't suggest they are micro-managing the person and don't trust them?

The impact that the leadership team have on employee wellbeing can't be overestimated.

COVID-19 specific

Although its been many months since the pandemic began, we're still learning more about this disease day by day, and have a lot of unanswered questions.

Things to think about

It's important that employers clearly communicate messages to their workforce to take away any worries and stresses linked to returning back to their workplace.

Colleagues, customers and visitors need to know that your workplace is COVID-secure. Employees also need to know how you'll manage their workloads, their wellbeing, any adjustments that are needed, and how you'll manage special situations such as those who are or have been shielding.

Therefore we recommend that you:

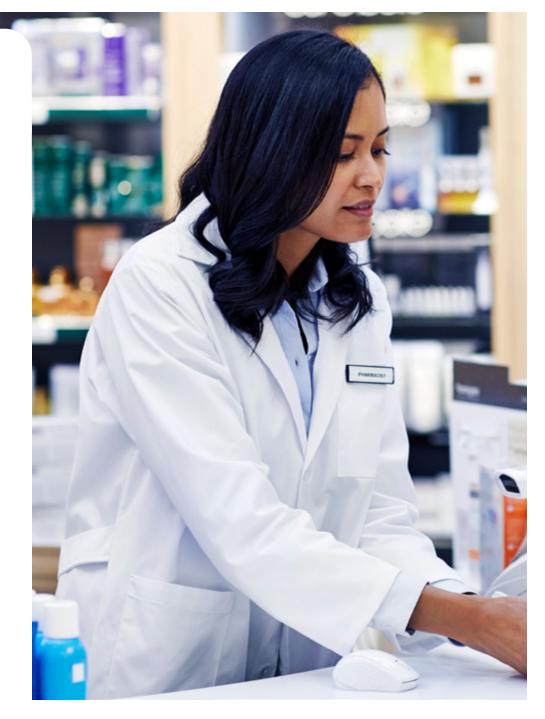
- develop a strategy that keeps you, your workforce, your customers and visitors as safe as possible
- collaborate/discuss the strategy, where appropriate, with your workforce as you create it
- make sure that you communicate your strategy clearly through the most appropriate media (brief

people in person or by telephone/conference call, confirm it in writing by email, print out leaflets/a booklet, update your website, put up clearly visible signage).

What to do if you need more assistance or help

There are a number of government/ professional bodies and organisations that can help you and your employees with COVID-19:

- You can get up-to-date information on GOV.UK and the Public Health England website.
- There is coronavirus information for people and businesses in:
 - **Scotland** on the Scottish Government website
 - Wales on the Welsh Government website
 - Northern Ireland on the nidirect website





- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) COVID-19 pages provide the latest advice and guidance for employers including how to make changes to the workplace to protect your people, assess the risk and be 'COVID-secure'.
- The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (acas) gives employees and employers free, impartial advice on workplace rights, rules and best practice. It also has a comprehensive COVID-19 section on its website, giving advice on working safety, social distancing and returning to the workplace including advice for those who have been shielding.
- The Chartered Institute for Professional Development (CIPD) has a COVID-19: returning to the workplace guide on its website,

- which will help you plan next steps as lockdown measures are eased. It also has a helpful occupational health factsheet, which outlines the kind of occupational health services an employer might offer.
- The Business Disability Forum
 has a Coronavirus and disability:
 what you need to know section
 on its website, providing advice
 specifically about coronavirus
 and disabled employees, which
 contains a COVID-19 toolkit to help
 employers identify and implement
 reasonable adjustments.
- The Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM) has published an employer's guide to engaging an occupational health physician; this is a doctor who specialises in diagnosing and treating workrelated illnesses.
- The Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM) is the UK organisation for all healthcare professionals working in or with an interest in occupational health. It can help employers find an occupational health provider, which gives them the services they need to support their employees' health and wellbeing, such as sickness absence management, health surveillance, counselling (mental health service) and physiotherapy (a musculoskeletal disorder MSK/MSD service).
- The NHS Your COVID recovery website. As you recover from COVID-19, you may still be coming to terms with the impact the virus has had on both your body and mind. This website helps you to understand what has happened and what you might expect as part

- of your recovery. It also provides information and support for family, friends and carers to help you both during recovery.
- The One You website can help you and your employees get healthier and feel better with free tips, tools, apps and support for your mind (Every mind matters) and your body.
- The <u>UK governments' small</u> business helpline offers advice and financial help from government backed schemes.



Common concerns for people when returning to the workplace

As we start to go back to our workplace, people may have concerns and feel worried about it. This is a completely normal and natural reaction. Coming back to work after a period away can be difficult under normal circumstances, let alone during these unprecedented difficult times.

Employers play a vital role in supporting their people. The first step is to talk your people, really listen and empathise – show you understand, care and want to help.

Here are some common issues and concerns people might have as they start to return the workplace.



Anticipatory anxiety

What is it? An uncomfortable feeling of nervousness, unease or worry about something that is happening or might happen in the future.

Anxiety levels have risen as a result of the pandemic. Although it's to be expected, it becomes an issue when it detracts from everyday life.

How to spot it

- Avoiding situations
- Focusing on future events or activities
- Distress in social situations
- Decreased concentration
- Tired/sleep disturbance
- Irritability/impatience
- Excessive fear
- Aches and shakes

What you can do to support your people

Point them to these resources:

- The self-help support recommended by Public Health England as part of its every mind matters campaign.
- NHS general anxiety disorder (GAD) overview.
- Mind mental health charity (anxiety support).

Social interactions and sensory overload

What is it? People may become anxious when they think about having to be in situations outside of their home such as commuting to work and the workplace itself.

These situations mean they'll be in close proximity of others and not in control of the environment (noise, cleanliness, air quality).

How to spot it

- Avoiding of situations
- Distress in social situations
- Interpersonal conflicts
- Anger/irritability/impatience
- Excessive fear/panic
- Hypervigilance
- (Also see signs and behaviours in anxiety section)

What you can do to support your people

- Show you understand their perspective.
- Agree a shared understanding of norms for the team within the workplace to help address different perspectives.
- Encourage any issues and concerns to be flagged to you ASAP.
- Encourage gradual exposure to the environment causing concern.
- Consider the anticipatory anxiety support options.

Point them to this resource:

 The NHS Your COVID recovery website – managing fear and anxiety section.

Isolation/loneliness

What is it? Loneliness is a subjective feeling about the gap between how much social contact someone wants and how much social contact they actually experience. Returning to the workplace won't necessarily address this sensitive issue because COVID control measures will be in place, such as social distancing, fewer interactions with people and split team attendance patterns.

How to spot it

- Changes in mood and behaviour.
- What you know about your people and their circumstances, for example, if they've had recent bereavements, relationship break-ups, if they live on their own, if they're an extravert or an introvert.
- You should learn about signs associated with depression

What you can do to support your people

Ask and listen to what they believe will help and see if you can accommodate it.

Point them to these resources:

- The self-help support recommended by Public Health England as part of their every mind matters campaign.
- Mind, a mental health charity, can help explain loneliness and give practical suggestions for what you can do and where you can go for support.
- Home-Start, a local community network of trained volunteers and expert support, helps families with young children through their challenging times. Nearly two thirds of families who come to Home-Start for support say that isolation and loneliness is their main reason for needing help.

Sleep problems and fatigue

What is it? Changes to normal routines combined with uncertainty and increased anxiety often express themselves by disrupting sleep and causing fatigue.

How to spot it

- · Looking tired
- Yawning
- Irritability
- Tearfulness
- Making more mistakes

What you can do to support your people

Point them to:

 The NHS Your COVID recovery website – sleeping well section

Loss/depression/other underlying mental health conditions

What is it? This unprecedented situation has had a significant impact, with many people experiencing loss in different ways such as:

- A person (friend or family)
- Way of life
- Safety
- Certainty
- A future
- The benefits of working from home

How to spot it

- Keep your eyes peeled for any changes in behaviour from your people's norms. Here are some key indicators for concern:
 - · Difficulty focusing
 - Social withdrawal
 - Irritability/emotional outbursts
 - Less productivity/morale problems
 - Lack of co-operation/ contribution
 - Safety problems
 - Less care in personal appearance and hygiene

What you can do to support your people

Point them to this resource:

- The NHS Your COVID
 recovery website grief and
 bereavement section
- Direct employees to their GP (NB some surgeries allow patients to self-refer to physiological services
- Mind mental health charity (depression support)
- Every mind matters.
- The NHS Your COVID recovery website – managing fear and anxiety section.
- The Samaritans for free on 116
 123 (24 hours a day, 365 days a year) or contact them by email or letter if things are too upsetting to talk about

Stamina and deconditioning

What is it? A lot of people who are away from work for a long period of time can find it difficult to come back. Following a normal routine and doing their day to day job as normal could be a challenge because they may be suffering from deconditioning or a lack or stamina.

Prolonged inactivity can lead to:

- Lowered cardiac or lung capacity
- Reduced muscle strength
- Being more prone to injury

It's important to build up strength and fitness slowly.

How to spot it

Talk to the person:

- Ask them how they are, how they're feeling
- Breathless on exertion
- Possible weight gain
- Reduced muscle bulk or strength
- · Becoming tired during the day
- Lack of concentration
- Sleepiness

What you can do to support your people

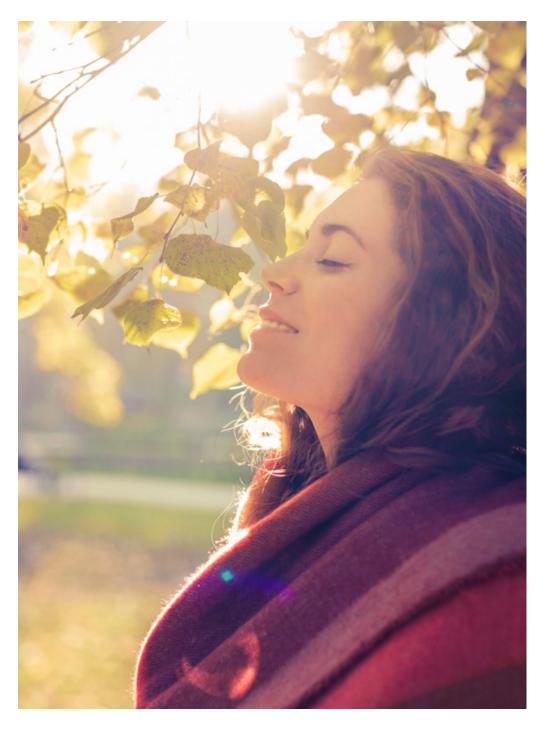
Point them to this resource:

The NHS Your COVID recovery website

Consider any adjustments you could make including a phased return to work.

Take extra steps for those who have been shielding.

See COVID-19 and its impact on physical fitness.



The long-term health impacts of COVID-19

Emerging medical research and anecdotal evidence from recovery support groups suggest that many people who have had both severe and mild symptoms of COVID-19 are experiencing lasting side effects and prolonged recovery.

As a result, rehabilitation is fast becoming the new priority in dealing with the impact of this pandemic and is crucial for people recovering. The Royal College of Occupational Therapists has published three guides to support people to manage post-viral fatigue and conserve their energy as they recover from COVID-19. These guides are endorsed by the Intensive Care Society and available as PDFs to download and share with people who are recovering. You can have a look at them here:

- Post viral fatigue guide Practical advice for people who
 have been treated in hospital
- Post viral fatigue guide -Practical advice for people who have recovered at home
- Conserving energy guide -Practical advice for people during and after having COVID-19

NHS England launched a service for people with ongoing health problems after having coronavirus. "Your COVID recovery" is an online portal for people in England to access tutorials, contact healthcare workers and track their progress. Tailored rehabilitation is also offered to those who qualify, following an assessment.

Employees experiencing difficulties should be encouraged to discuss these with their employer, reach out to family and colleagues. People are usually willing to offer help and support, and it's important not to feel alone in your recovery.

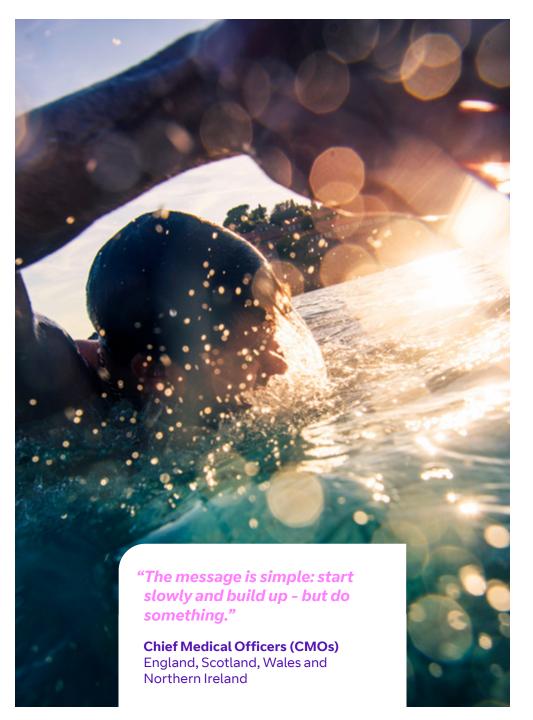
Nutrition plays a vital part in the recovery process for all patients with COVID-19, particularly those who have suffered cardiac distress, pulmonary distress, or those who have been critically ill. Take a look at our section on diet and nutrition for advice on a balanced diet.

COVID-19 and its impact on physical fitness

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused entire populations to go into lockdown and live in home-confinement for months, which has led to significantly less physical activity, affecting people of all ages, genders and ethnicities. It's forced some people, even the youngest and fittest, to suddenly become inactive. Periods of lockdown make it hard for people to do the sort of exercise that they would normally do, like exercising outdoors, going to the gym and playing sports.

To maintain muscle mass and metabolic health, the best tip is to keep moving. Resistance exercise, training that improves muscle strength and endurance, can be a positive way of fighting off the negative effects of long periods without physical activity. Taking regular walks as a break from sinking into our sofa is helpful too.

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges published a report in 2015 called Exercise, the Miracle cure, which promotes the benefits of activity, and emphasises the dangers of inactivity. Physical activity improves the people's health with chronic conditions and prevents many common diseases, reducing the risk of each of these by 20% to 50%.



The benefits of achieving even the minimum level of activity include:

- Helping maintain a healthy body weight.
- Lowering blood pressure.
- Decreasing the risk of heart disease by at least 30%.
- Lowering the risk of type 2 diabetes by at least 30%.
- Reducing the risk of certain cancers by at least 30%.
- Increasing muscle strength and function.
- Improving bone health and strength.
- Helping to promote positive mental health.
- Reducing the risk of dementia by at least 30%.

A report from UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of England,
Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland shows that, in general, the more time spent being physically active, the greater the health benefits.
Interestingly, the health gains are especially significant for those who are currently the least active, as each minute of physical activity is proportionately better.

Here's a list of things we adults should aim to do:

- Aim to be physically active every day. Any activity is better than none, and more is better still.
- Do strengthening activities that work all the major muscles (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms) at least two days a week. (Weights, yoga, sit ups, burpees, pilates for example)

- Try to do at least one of these:
 - 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity (brisk walking, gentle cycling tennis, gardening) each week.
 - 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity (running, fast cycling, skipping, etc.) each week.
- Reduce the time you spend sitting or lying down and break up long periods of not moving with some activity.

Coronavirus – know the risks and stay well

Now that we can get out and about more, it's really important we all continue to take care and do our bit to stop the rise in infection and stop a second spike.

With pubs and restaurants once again welcoming customers, it's easy to feel excited that we've got our independence and freedom back. However, the virus is still very much among us. So let's continue to protect

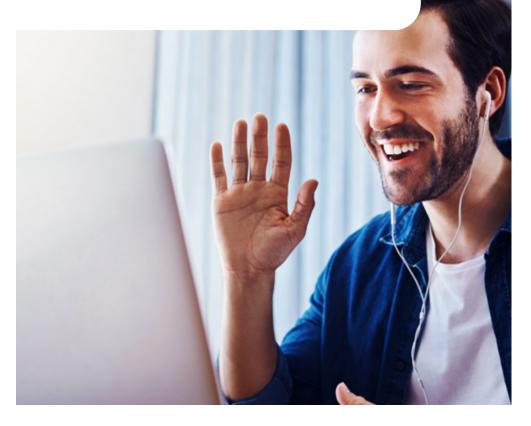
ourselves and those more vulnerable in our communities, by carefully considering our actions and avoiding high risk activities to help us stay as safe as possible.



Additional support

Support for workers – events over the past months have been challenging and many people have looked to their workplace to provide them with support.

Depending on what the need is, this can take many forms such as insights into the pandemic, forums to raise issues and concerns, access to an employee assistance programme, occupational health service, opportunities to take part in online sessions that support wellbeing, such as mindfulness.



There are a number of professional bodies and organisations that can help you and your employees:

- The UK governments' small business helpline – offering advice and financial help from government-backed schemes.
- The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (acas) - gives employees and employers free, impartial advice on workplace rights, rules and best practice. They also offer training and help to resolve disputes.
- Business in the Community (BiTC)

 a unique network of purposeful leaders to share insight, expertise and create innovative programmes that deliver impact. Take a look at their "Whole systems approach to health and wellbeing".
- The Chartered Management Institute (CMI) – a chartered professional body dedicated to promoting the highest standards in management and leadership excellence.
- The Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM) – the UK organisation for all healthcare professionals working in or with an interest in occupational health.

They can help employers find an Occupational Health provider which offers the services they need to support their employees' health and wellbeing such as sickness absence management, health surveillance, counselling and physiotherapy.

- The Chartered Institute for Professional Development (CIPD)

 they champion the people and organisations they work with to have better work and working lives, set professional standards and support their members to make a real impact in their work. They also provide advice to individuals and employers.
- Wealth at Work Provide
 a complete service helping
 employers and trustees support
 employees and pension scheme
 members to make informed
 decisions to improve their
 financial wellbeing throughout
 their career and to maximise
 income at retirement.

Additional resources

Note: the following may need to be adapted according to your businesses particular circumstances and the latest government guidance.

Guidance for the public on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Caught in the Middle 10 Tips for Managers Leading From Home

Finding Balance: Evidence-Based Strategies for Employers

For Work-Family Balance, Give Policy a Personal Touch

Mental health and psychosocial considerations during COVID-19 outbreak

Returning to the workplace after COVID-19 lockdown. A toolkit

Supporting employee mental health when reopening the workplace

Find out more about the range of resources on offer from BT's Small Business
Support Scheme.



Offices worldwide

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