



# WINTER WELLNESS

STAYING WELL THIS WINTER



# DURING WINTER MONTHS

During winter months, there is an increased negative impact on an individual's health and wellbeing due to reduced daylight hours, poor weather, and time to reflect. It is worth remembering that this is the second winter that we are working through the pandemic and this may take a toll on seeing our loved ones.

We want this pack to provide access to support and guidance, but also to highlight some of the opportunities that are available to all our people this winter.

## WE'D LIKE YOU TO:



**Consider the 5 steps to mental wellbeing and see if there are any ideas that you can take away**



**Save this pack as an informative resource that you can use when you need it**



**Use this pack to reflect on your own mental wellbeing**

If you have any questions, queries or feedback about this pack, please contact your local [HR and OD Contacts](#).

Click the options below to see what we have in offer...

# OUR SUPPORT



# SPREADING KINDNESS



Watch and be inspired by [Tim Keogh's video](#) on kindness in healthcare. Tim talks about:

- what happens when we choose to be kinder to each other
- when we choose to be kind to our patients
- when we choose to be kinder to ourselves

SO,  
HOW ARE YOU?



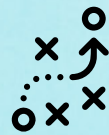


# MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

We have a range of services and resources in place to help support you with your [mental health](#). Take a look at the highlighted resources below to find out more about what can be accessed through the Employee Assistance Programme, how the Mental Health First Aid network can support you and how you can get in touch with the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service to get up to 9 months tailored support to help you stay mentally well at work.



The [5 Step Guide for Managers](#) gives a helpful overview of how to begin to support positive mental health in the workplace, and the [MHFA Line Manager Resource](#) is a more in-depth resource to equip managers to start a conversation about mental health.



When a supportive conversation about mental health is needed, it's good practice for colleagues and line managers to undertake a [Wellness Action Plan](#).



If a colleague is struggling to stay at work or is absent from work due to their mental health, they can access the [Access to Work Mental Health Support Service](#). They may also want to talk to a colleague who is trained in [Mental Health First Aid](#).



NHS England and NHS Improvement have launched [Every Mind Matters](#), a ground-breaking new platform to help people take simple steps to look after their mental health, improve their mental wellbeing and support others.



We are a [Time to Change](#) employer, there are a number of helpful resources on [Time to Change](#) about how to start a conversation about mental health.



## MENTAL WELLBEING



# STRESS

It's important to recognise the signs and symptoms of stress in our colleagues, and create an environment which encourages open conversation. Stress affects us all at different times and in different ways. It can cause people to feel physically unwell, cause mental health problems and make existing problems worse.

Talking about stress may be an uneasy conversation for colleagues, but talking about it earlier may prevent further ill health and sickness absence. Just like any other risk to health in the workplace, we have a responsibility to try to prevent work-related stress.

The [Health and Safety \(HSE\) Stress Talking Toolkit](#) is designed to be used to help frame an initial conversation about stress. Our [stress assessment template](#) is helpful to record your conversation and agreed actions.

Should a colleague be absent from work for a stress-related absence, a referral to [Active Care](#) can be made within the first two weeks of a stress-related fit note. This service is delivered by our [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) provider and offers colleagues more proactive support than standard EAP services or Occupational Health.

## SAD

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

**SAD IS A TYPE OF DEPRESSION THAT COMES AND GOES IN A SEASONAL PATTERN**

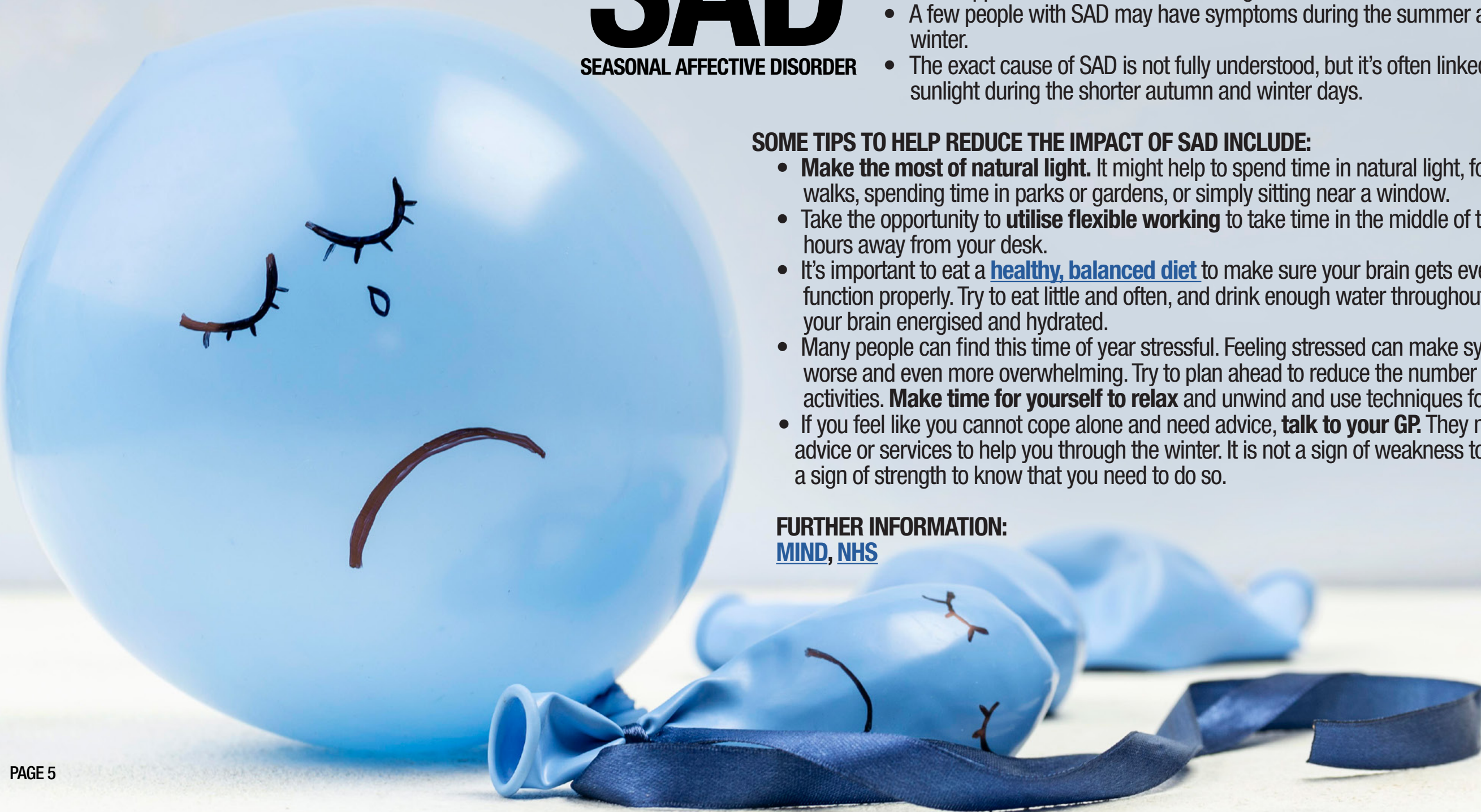
- SAD is sometimes known as “winter [depression](#)” because the symptoms are usually more apparent and more severe during the winter.
- A few people with SAD may have symptoms during the summer and feel better during the winter.
- The exact cause of SAD is not fully understood, but it's often linked to reduced exposure to sunlight during the shorter autumn and winter days.

### SOME TIPS TO HELP REDUCE THE IMPACT OF SAD INCLUDE:

- **Make the most of natural light.** It might help to spend time in natural light, for example going for walks, spending time in parks or gardens, or simply sitting near a window.
- Take the opportunity to **utilise flexible working** to take time in the middle of the day to enjoy daylight hours away from your desk.
- It's important to eat a [healthy, balanced diet](#) to make sure your brain gets everything it needs to function properly. Try to eat little and often, and drink enough water throughout the day to help keep your brain energised and hydrated.
- Many people can find this time of year stressful. Feeling stressed can make symptoms of SAD feel worse and even more overwhelming. Try to plan ahead to reduce the number of stressful or difficult activities. **Make time for yourself to relax** and unwind and use techniques for [managing stress](#).
- If you feel like you cannot cope alone and need advice, **talk to your GP**. They may be able to offer you advice or services to help you through the winter. It is not a sign of weakness to ask for help, rather it is a sign of strength to know that you need to do so.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

[MIND](#), [NHS](#)





# FLU JABS

All NHS England and NHS Improvement colleagues can be vaccinated against flu at a pharmacy of their choice this autumn/winter. You can claim the cost of the vaccine back through our expenses system, with a valid receipt, up to the value of [£15](#).

Colleagues who are considered to be at risk of flu should take up the offer of a free NHS flu vaccination as normal. If you're unsure if you meet the criteria of being offered a flu vaccination through this year's NHS scheme, please [check your eligibility here](#).

# COVID-19

A coronavirus (COVID-19) booster vaccine dose helps improve the protection you have from your first 2 doses of the vaccine. It helps give you longer-term protection against getting seriously ill from COVID-19. All adults are now offered a booster dose at least **3 months after** you had your 2nd dose.

## MOST PEOPLE CAN:

- [Book a vaccination appointment online](#) for an appointment at a vaccination centre or pharmacy.
- Go to a walk-in vaccination site to get vaccinated without needing an appointment: find your [nearest walk-in vaccination site on the NHS website](#).

# WELLNESS WHILE WORKING







## PLAN B OMICRON VARIANT

The UK has moved to Plan B of the [COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021](#) in response to the threat posed by the emerging Omicron variant.

From Monday 13 October we've encouraged individuals to work from home if they can, and only work in-person in our offices if it is necessary either for business or for health and wellbeing reasons. We will review this position on a regular basis and further updates will be provided via our **internal communications channels**.

# SUPPORTING WORKING FROM HOME

[Display Screen Equipment \(DSE\) assessments](#) – there is an online form which is completed as part of [Mandatory and Statutory Training \(MaST\)](#) however if needed, you can also [revisit this information](#).

All colleagues can request equipment to work from home e.g. computer monitor, keyboard, mouse and chair via Corporate [IT and Smarter Working](#).

### REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

We all work our best when we are well supported. This guidance is designed to help to support staff who may require a reasonable adjustment and line managers who have a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare for all staff within your team.

If you require additional reasonable adjustments please visit the [Reasonable Adjustments hub](#) and [complete a Reasonable Adjustment and Accessibility request form](#) and include what support is required and a member of the [team](#) will be in touch with you within 3 working days.

Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that any direct reports have an up to date [Personal Emergency and Evacuation Plans \(PEEP\)](#) in place before any return to office working.

Here's some further [Guidance around reasonable adjustments](#).

## BEFORE GOING INTO AN OFFICE

Once you have completed an [Orientation session](#) (this may be different in regions) you will be given access to the [Condeco platform](#) to enable you to book a desk and meetings rooms.

## TESTING AND SELF-ISOLATION

- You're strongly encouraged to take [Lateral Flow Tests](#) before visiting the office and report the results via the [gov.uk](#) website to keep yourself, your friends, families and communities safe. Free tests are available from local pharmacies or by ordering via the [government portal](#).
- If you test positive for COVID-19 and have recently been into one of our offices, you must inform your line manager as soon as possible, using the [Positive Test Flow Chart](#) to guide you.
- You must not attend an office if you have COVID-19 symptoms regardless of how well you feel.
- You must not attend an office if have been notified to self-isolate or are a contact of an individual who tests positive for COVID-19.
- From 16 August, people in England who are fully vaccinated or under 18 will not need to [self-isolate after close contact](#) with someone who has COVID-19. You'll still need to take a PCR test. If your [Polymerase Chain Reaction \(PCR\) test](#) is positive, or if you have symptoms, you'll need to self-isolate.
- If you're symptomatic you must arrange to get a [PCR test](#) as soon as possible and work from home until you receive a negative result or are no longer required to self-isolate. It is a disciplinary offence to attend a workplace if you knowingly have tested positive or have been advised to self-isolate.
- We also encourage you to download and activate the [NHS COVID-19 app](#) on either your corporate or personal mobile device.

# WELLNESS IN THE OFFICES

## PLAN YOUR JOURNEY

- If you use public transport to get to work, consider staggering start, finish and shift times to avoid travelling during busy times
- Walking or cycling all or part of your journey will help to avoid crowds.
- If you travel by car, consider traveling with colleagues you have formed a support bubble with
- The use of face coverings is recommended in enclosed and crowded spaces, such as on public transport. Since the introduction of the government's Plan B in England, face coverings are mandatory in most public indoor spaces and public transport.

All bookable desks are equipped with one or two monitors, hub/docking station, keyboard and mouse. Touchdown spaces will have access to a power supply. Please remember to take your laptop, power supply, headset, mobile phone and charger as these are not readily available.

If you feel that you require an office Reasonable Adjustment, please talk to your line manager and complete this [Workplace passport template](#).

## WEARING MASKS

Following [government guidance](#), we are encouraging all colleagues to wear masks when accessing the office and in any communal areas.





# KEEPING YOURSELF AND YOUR COLLEAGUES SAFE IN THE OFFICE

## WHEN IN ONE OF OUR OFFICES YOU MUST:

- Comply with local signage in office areas including common areas/receptions.
- Report any breaches of the measures put in place to your chief of staff/area lead or line manager.
- Keep to the desk that you have booked for, or are sitting in for the day and not share other desks.
- Clean your workstation (including all telephones, keyboards, mouse and the desk itself) at the beginning and end of each session. Hygiene stations, anti-bacterial gel and wipes for cleaning will continue to be provided.
- Clear your desk of all your belongings at the end of your session, and clean meetings rooms once you've used them. We're operating a clear desk policy to ensure our desks are cleaned thoroughly at the end of each day.
- To reduce the risk of transmission, try to limit your use of lifts and give priority to those that have a greater need than yours.
- Be mindful of those who may want to maintain distance.
- Ensure you don't overcrowd collaborative spaces and ensure they are left clean and tidy. Try to limit time in shared spaces.
- Keep to areas of the office that you need to be in and don't enter floors or other areas unnecessarily during this time.
- Comply with the H&S measures in place in your office, which you will be made aware of during your [Orientation session](#).

## VENTILATION:

- Windows should be opened when colleagues are in the office, in inclement weather windows should be opened for 10 minutes each hour to support with effective ventilation.
- Where windows are unable to open there will be a full risk assessment in place with appropriate mitigations enacted, this risk assessment and actions will be available for colleagues to use.
- Fans, including desk fans, are not permitted for use in the office areas.

## FACE COVERINGS:

- You don't have to wear a face covering while in the office, but they should be worn as a reasonable extra precaution in high traffic areas or where you may encounter people you do not normally work with, such as communal areas (for example walking around the office, kitchens, corridors, lifts, toilets).
- Acknowledge that some colleagues may be exempt from wearing masks for medical reasons. You should also be aware that face coverings may make it harder to communicate with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound.

## HAND SANITISATION:

Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands in line with the [NHS guidance](#) or use the hand sanitiser available. Please also regularly sanitise your workstations (desk, monitor, keyboard, mouse etc.) before and after use.





One of the [5 steps to mental wellbeing](#) is an NHS initiative aimed at highlighting specific steps which could improve our overall mental wellbeing.

The next pages will focus on these steps and provide some inspiration to consider or share.

# 5 STEPS TO WELLBEING







# CONNECT

Connect with people around you either virtually or in person. The relationships you have are the cornerstones of your life. Building and developing these connections will support and enrich you every day.

## WHY NOT?

- Take the time to reconnect with someone, an old friend, colleague or someone in your family you don't speak to as often as you would like.
- Plan a midday walk with someone nearby, making the most of the winter sun and taking time to connect or reconnect.
- Join in [NHS England and NHS Improvement coffee roulette](#) and connect with someone new.
- Request to be a coach or mentor for others, or request to be coached in an area of development. This will make new contacts and develop your skills.

# BE ACTIVE

Regular physical activity is associated with enhanced wellbeing across all age groups. It doesn't need to be particularly intense to make a difference. Below are some of the activities you can get involved in.

[Couch to 5K week by week - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Your Health and Wellbeing - virtual yoga sessions \(sharepoint.com\)](#)



# TAKE NOTICE

## INDIVIDUAL RESET AND RECOVERY

### RESET

It is important that we move forward from just adapting to the new world we are working in. Make sure that you have taken the time to pause to reset and embrace our new virtual/hybrid ways working of working.

- Have you considered your reset?
- What does this look like for you?
- What support do you need to achieve this?

### RECOVERY

Set aside time to reflect and focus on your individual recovery, and how you can successfully support the organisation to recover and restore systems and services.

- What does recovery look like for you?
- What are you going to do differently?
- What support do you need to achieve this?

More information about reset and recovery is available on the [our library](#).

## KEEP LEARNING

### [Learning and Development Hub](#)

- Development for all - including 15:1, Corporate Athletes and Analyse That!
- Information about internal coaching and mentoring
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I), Allyship and recognising racism programmes
- Virtual Leadership ambassador programme (effect Virtual Leadership)

[Leadership academy](#) – All colleagues have access to programmes and events

[Learning available on ESR](#) – There are 600 nationally created NHS England and NHS Improvement e-Learning courses on ESR including: Microsoft Office Training, Leadership Academy's Edward Jenner management programme, Leading, Managing and Dealing with Change, Coaching to Support Change and Introduction to Project Management.

## GIVE KINDNESS OR TIME

Researchers have noted that acts of kindness in the workplace generally do not go unnoticed and have a positive impact on the working environment and individuals' wellbeing.

- Acts of kindness within a work environment seem to create a ripple effect of similar thoughtful behaviour, which propagates and spreads
- Why not do a random act of kindness to a friend, colleague or family member
- Take the time to thank someone who has helped you or supported you either privately or in a team meeting
- Acknowledge others kindness or thoughtfulness
- Help a colleague with their workload if they are under pressure – even the offer will be appreciated
- Create a space to chat about other things than the job at hand – For example, send funny videos or positive messages
- Regularly meet as a team or other group for half an hour to catch up and not talk about work
- Offer support of someone is going through a difficult time – even if it is just giving them your time to listen
- Why not volunteer to join a staff network or group by giving some time.







# SIGNPOSTING

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Our [Mental Health First Aiders](#) can:

- Understand the important factors affecting mental ill health.
- Provide Mental Health First Aid to someone experiencing a mental health issue or crisis.
- Listen non-judgementally and hold supportive conversations.
- Signpost people to professional help, recognising that the role of a Mental Health First Aider does not replace the need for ongoing support.
- If you need, help, advice or support you can reach out to [nhsei.MHFAS@nhs.net](mailto:nhsei.MHFAS@nhs.net).

## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

Our Employee Assistance Programme is a confidential service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, which can support colleagues with a range of concerns, including relationships, stress, legal and financial concerns, bereavement and discrimination.

To access Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) online please visit [Health Assured EAP](#) and enter 72936 in the username box and in the password box. Access your free 24, hour telephone counselling and information services at any time of the day and night.  
Call: **0800 7832808**.

## NATIONAL OFFERS

[Freedom To Speak Up](#)

[Occupational health](#)

[Health and Wellbeing Hub](#)

[National staff networks](#)

[Smarter working](#)

[Our Ways Of Delivery FAQs](#).