

Wellness Action Plan (WAP)

Guidance to help you complete your WAP

What is a Wellness Action Plan (WAP) and who is it for?

A WAP is a personalised, practical tool we can all use – whether we have a mental health problem or not. It is a two page document which asks various questions for you to complete to help to identify **what keeps you well** at work, **what causes you to become unwell** and the appropriate **support you would like to receive** from your manager or others to boost your wellbeing or support you through a recovery.

We all have mental health just as we all have physical health, and this WAP is just a tool to help ensure that our wellbeing is being prioritised.

How can a WAP help?

NB: Now might be a good time to have a quick look at the blank WAP at the end of this guide, so you have a sense of what it covers; though this is explained in more detail below.

A WAP reminds us of what we need to do to stay well at work and details what our line managers may be able to do to better support us. It also helps us develop an awareness of our working style, stress triggers and how we respond to stress, and it can help us to communicate these to our manager.

The information in the WAP form will be held confidentially and reviewed by you and your Manager together at a time you agree.

You only need to provide information that you are comfortable sharing and that relates to your role and workplace.

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that data gathered in this form will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone without the permission of the member of staff, except in certain circumstances which may require confidentiality to be broken if there is a risk of harm to self or others.

The WAP should be held confidentially between manager and employee, and your manager will be able to tell you about how it will be stored.

The WAP is not legally binding, but is intended as an agreement between you and your manager in order to promote your wellbeing or address any existing mental health needs, including any adjustments you may wish to discuss.

Further guidance can be found through MIND [here](#).

Who/when can a WAP be used?

We can all use a WAP, whether we have a mental health condition or not. Some of the ways they can be used are:

- to support us if we are experiencing a mental health condition or a period of emotional distress, and want to know more about how the workplace can support us
- as a proactive tool to promote and maintain mental health at work; with whole team, with new starters, or individual as and when appropriate
- as a return to work process when we have been off for reasons linked to mental health.

What should your WAP cover?

This guide includes your blank copy of a WAP at the back, so you can view each section to understand what to consider. But in summary, a WAP covers...

- different approaches you can adopt to support your mental wellbeing
- your early warning signs of poor mental health for you and your manager to look out for
- your workplace triggers for poor mental health or stress
- potential impact of poor mental health on you
- what support you need from your manager
- actions and positive steps that both you and your manager can take if you are experiencing stress or poor mental health
- an agreed time to review your WAP and any support measures which are in place
- anything else you feel would be useful in supporting your mental health

What are the potential benefits?

Whilst this can sometimes feel uncomfortable or awkward to complete, the benefits can be great and have a hugely positive impact on your wellbeing in the workplace. Some benefits are that a WAP

- enhances your self-awareness
- helps open the dialogue to topics which can sometimes feel uncomfortable to talk about, and might otherwise make us avoid seeking support when we need it
- helps you and others to understand your needs: with positive impacts on productivity, performance and job satisfaction.

What is the WAP process?

1. Your manager should provide you with this UHBW WAP guidance document, and the included blank WAP
2. You should then have a go at completing it. This is **your** WAP, and should be written and 'owned' by you. If however you do struggle, then your manager can offer to help
3. You and your manager should schedule a convenient time to meet to review and finalise it
4. Discuss and agree with your manager how it will be used; e.g. both keep a copy, and agree when it would be helpful to review it
5. Agree to keep it as a live, flexible document.

Guidance around 'reasonable adjustments'

One benefit of completing a WAP is that it may help identify appropriate changes to the workplace which might be helpful for your wellbeing.

The law states that an employer has to make 'reasonable adjustments' to prevent people being at a disadvantage as a result of any 'physical feature of the premises, or by any provision, criteria or practice of the employer if they are disabled'.

This means employers are required to make any 'reasonable' changes to the actual workspace and also the way they require employees to carry out a job, so that employees are not prevented from working.

If appropriate, your manager should ask you to consider what you would find beneficial rather than making suggestions, as you are normally in the best position to consider for yourself.

When is an adjustment 'reasonable'?

Employees are not able to demand any adjustment they like. Employers have a duty to provide adjustments which are 'reasonable' for the type and size employer they are.

The 'reasonable' part of these changes refers to what is feasible from the employer's perspective. The employer will consider how effective, practical, affordable and also how disruptive any adjustment would be. Your manager should discuss this with you, but may need to seek advice and guidance first, so please be patient whilst they try to support you where possible.

Some adjustments will not be 'reasonable' because a certain practice is essential to the business or service, such as being able to use a phone in a call centre, or being able to deal with people in a customer facing role. It is therefore important that you think carefully about the requirements of the job role, and the type of work, so that you can think ahead to whether the kind of adjustments you would need would be 'reasonable'.

Questions and support

- If you have any further questions related to reasonable adjustments, please contact Employee Services on **0117 3425000**.
- For information on what support is available for staff wellbeing, please view the Wellbeing pages on the Trust intranet. This includes resources for staff to help support themselves, access to 24/7 support, and what to do if concerned for a member of staff's safety.

Your 'Wellness Action Plan' (WAP)

A 'WAP' is a personalised, practical tool that anyone can use to help identify what keeps us well at work, what causes us to become unwell, and what we or others can do to improve our wellbeing. This is **your** plan. You only need to provide information that you are comfortable sharing. A guide to help understand what this is for is on the Trust intranet Wellbeing page, or email wellbeing@uhbw.nhs.uk

What helps you to stay mentally healthy at work? (E.g. ensuring you have a lunch break)

What be helpful for your Manager to do to proactively support you to stay mentally healthy at work? (E.g. regular catch-ups,)

Are there any situations or things at work that can trigger poor mental health for you? (E.g. tight deadlines)

How might experiencing poor mental health impact on your work? (E.g. headaches, feeling tense, less patience)

Are there any early warning signs that you and others might notice when you are starting to experience poor mental health? (E.g. withdrawing and being less talkative)

What support could be put in place to minimise triggers or help you to manage the impact?
(E.g. help with knowing how to prioritise work, flexible working patterns)

Are there elements of your individual working style that it is worth your manager being aware of?
(E.g. preference for more face to face, or more email contact)

If others notice early warning signs that you are experiencing poor mental health – what would be helpful for them to do? (E.g. talk to you discreetly about it)

What steps can you take if you start to experience poor mental health at work?
(E.g. take a short break)

Are there any next steps that would be helpful to take right now?
(E.g. look at self-care resources on Wellbeing pages of Intranet, see GP, seek further support)

Employee signature:		Date:	
Print name:			
Manager signature:		Date:	
Print name:			
Date to be reviewed:			