



# People and Wellbeing Strategy

Guide Dogs:  
A Great  
Place to be



## Introduction

This People and Wellbeing Strategy is about how we create a culture where we can all feel supported, engaged, healthy, and productive. A culture where everyone can thrive and our health and wellbeing are as important as anything else we do in a day.

We know that life is full of ups and downs, inside and outside of work, and this can affect how well we do our jobs. Some days we will feel great and we achieve things that surprise us, but other days may be rubbish and all we can do is get through it.

We recognise that, and we want to create a culture where you can be yourself, every day. This involves providing you with the right working conditions, the right support, and the opportunities for you to look after your own wellbeing.

Many wellbeing strategies focus on identifying and supporting people when they are struggling. We want to be different. We want to support you, but we also want to empower you to look after your own wellbeing. We need you to work in partnership with us to create an environment where everyone benefits from healthy, engaging and productive work.

This brochure will show you how we'll do this, what your part is and how we measure success.

We all have our part to play so please get involved, find out about your local Wellbeing Teams, take part in activities and learn more about how you can support your own wellbeing and that of your colleagues, friends, families, and the people we help every day.

## Studies show that...

# 1 in 6

Mental health is the leading cause of absence in the UK. Every week, 1 in 6 people at work experiences a common mental health issue such as anxiety and depression.



# Four pillars

Our People and Wellbeing Strategy is based on Four pillars:

## 1 Self care

Most people know that when we feel mentally and physically fit and healthy it is easier to cope with life's difficulties. But when things get busy, looking after ourselves is often the first thing we neglect. We want to create a culture where looking after your own wellbeing at work is as important as anything else you do.

We value our people. You do great work and we want to help you appreciate yourselves as much as we do.

## 2 Leadership

Building a culture where our mental health and wellbeing is a priority takes leadership. Leadership from our Board, by our managers and at every level of our organisation.

We'll provide training where it's needed. We'll make sure everyone has access to the support they need, and we'll create opportunities for everyone to get involved.

We encourage passion. We have Regional Wellbeing Teams and Wellbeing Buddies so if you're interested in helping us make Guide Dogs a great place to be please get involved.

# Four pillars



## 3 Healthy working culture

We want to build a culture that promotes healthy behaviours and healthy lifestyles. A culture that celebrates our diversity, makes us feel good about the work we do and helps us to stay fit and healthy.

We recognise that mental health problems are a reality in every workplace and for many of the people we help. We are determined that this won't be a barrier to leading a full life. We actively challenge stigma and will go the extra mile to make sure people get the support they might need.

## 4 People support

To help us create a culture that supports all our people we need to understand what you need. There are lots of ways we do this.

Our Regional Wellbeing Teams can feed back ideas and suggestions to the National Wellbeing Team, but we also have more formal ways to consult, through 'My Contribution' discussions or staff wellbeing surveys.

The more we know, the more successful we'll be. If you have any ideas on how we can do things better, please tell us.

We know this strategy will help all our people to thrive, but we need your support to make it happen.



# What we are doing

## National Wellbeing Team

Their main job is to make sure this strategy is a success. With members from each of our Directorates they'll monitor how we are doing and review the strategy as we go forward.

## Regional Wellbeing Teams

Made up from staff volunteers in each of our regions, this team will be responsible for translating any actions from the National Wellbeing Team into local activities.

## Wellbeing buddies

It's good to talk. Wellbeing buddies are volunteers trained to support staff who may be struggling with their mental health and wellbeing. They are not professionals but they will be able to listen without judgement and signpost you to help.

## Wellbeing activities

From yoga to lunchtime walks or Zumba classes. From personal resilience to coping with loss. There are lots of opportunities to get involved. It is up to you how much you do.

## Newcomers Welcome Programme

We want our people to know that we care about them before they even start work with us. This brochure is part of that induction. As part of our commitment to you our induction will include e-learning on mental health awareness and information on where to get support if you need it. We want working for Guide Dogs to be a positive experience from day one.

## Manager training

We'll provide managers with training to help them understand the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing and what they can do to help their teams.



# What we are doing

## Frontline worker training

We recognise that our frontline workers often help people who are struggling with their own mental health and wellbeing. We want you to be better prepared to have these conversations. We'll provide the training you need.

## Information portal

We recognise that some people feel uncomfortable talking about their wellbeing at work. We do not want you to miss out. Our intranet and Learning Management System (LMS), Gateway has lots of useful information and links on mental health and wellbeing that everyone will be able to access. Please take advantage of it.

## Self-care, resilience and compassion

We need to look after ourselves so we can continue to do great work and support each other. Life is full of challenges, coping and knowing how to bounce back are important skills. What we do at Guide Dogs shows great compassion for others, we need to be able to show that same compassion for ourselves. We have lots of training and information on these subjects and we encourage you to make use of them.



# Five Ways to Wellbeing

The Five Ways to Wellbeing “CLANG” are proven ways where small improvements can have a positive impact on our mental health and wellbeing.





# Connect

Good relationships with family, friends and our wider communities are important for our mental wellbeing.

You could try...

- Talking to someone new
- Reaching out to someone you haven't in a while
- Starting a lunch and natter club at work
- Joining a social or sports club



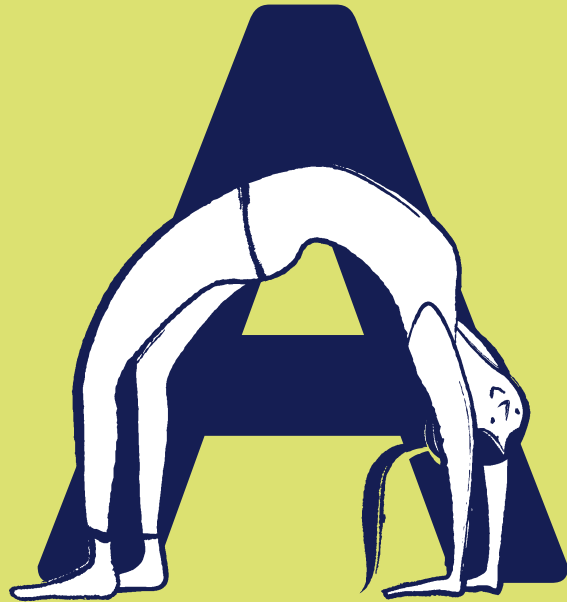


# keep Learning

Learning new skills keeps your brain cells healthy and can give you a sense of achievement and confidence.

You could try...

- Setting yourself a challenge you will enjoy achieving
- Taking up a new hobby
- Take on a new responsibility at work
- Create and host a quiz to help raise funds for Guide Dogs



# be Active

Regular physical activity reduces depression and anxiety. This isn't about running a marathon it is about finding an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.

You could try...

- Walking to the shops instead of driving
- Joining a friend on a dog walk
- Yoga
- Join a dance class

# take Notice

Taking time out to notice and enjoy the world around us can help us be calm.

You could try...

- Mindfulness and meditation
- Having a 'clear the clutter' day
- Taking photographs of things you notice on your walk
- Taking time to reflect on the good things that have happened to you each day, before going to sleep



# Give

Helping others can make us feel good, even the smallest gesture can make a big difference.

You could try...

- Saying thank you
- Checking in on a neighbour
- Raising money for a favourite charity
- Becoming a Wellbeing buddy





# Why we're doing it

By helping our people with their mental health and wellbeing we are helping you to be at your best. This will give you a sense of achievement and increased confidence that will have a positive impact on all areas of your life.

The people we support will benefit because we are better able to help them live the lives they choose.

As an organisation we benefit because we'll save money that can be better spent on people who need our services.

People who work for organisations who invest in their **MENTAL WEALTH**:



Are more resilient



Are more adaptable



Are more productive



Are happier



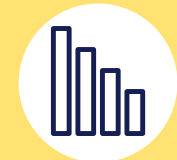
Do a better job



Are more loyal



Take less time off



Have fewer accidents

# What you can do

**Take some time to think about your role, your mental health and wellbeing – what improvements would you like to make?**

Prioritise your wellbeing. We know this can be difficult sometimes, but take advantage of the opportunities we provide. We'll support you, but we need you to do your bit.

Think about the Five Ways to Wellbeing, what ideas do they give you for improving your wellbeing?

Get involved with your Regional Wellbeing Teams. This may include becoming a member of the team, helping them organise events or just getting involved in the things they do. The more people get involved the greater the benefits for everyone.



Take advantage of the support we offer. The more we understand why things are important, the more likely we are to do something about it.

Explore what works. Some activities will not suit you, others will. Keep trying.

**Tell us what works and what more we can do. Your feedback is vital to our success, let us know how we can do better.**

# We will know we've been successful when...



- ✓ You consider wellbeing as **important** as other things you do at work.
- ✓ You get involved in wellbeing activities to improve your own mental health and wellbeing.
- ✓ Managers **encourage wellbeing conversations** and encourage their teams to get involved in activities.
- ✓ Managers have the **skills and confidence** to help their people get the right support if they are struggling with their mental health and wellbeing.
- ✓ You recognise that **our wellbeing culture** has improved and you are personally benefiting.
- ✓ You are **more willing to tell us** that you are struggling with poor mental health or wellbeing and seek support.
- ✓ You tell us we are.

# Employee Assistance Programme

To support this strategy you can access Vita Health Group's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Life can be a bit of a rollercoaster and from time to time we all need some support, whether it's to talk something through, a need for information, some help to move life forward or an emergency situation.

This free and confidential support service is designed to give you unlimited access to information, advice and emotional support to help you prepare for and manage all of life's ups and downs, events and challenges.

Available **24 hours a day, 365 days a year**, expert advice is available for you whenever you need it – online and by telephone – giving you early access and intervention before issues get complex or to a point of crisis or ill health.

[www.my-eap.com](http://www.my-eap.com)  
**24 hour Freephone Helpline**  
**0800 111 6387**

