

Wellbeing guidance for workplaces and returning to work

Whether you run your own business and employ others or are returning to work following a period of absence, this guide provides some useful tips and information on how to support your own or your employee's wellbeing.

Everyone is getting used to living a bit differently during the Coronavirus pandemic and things changing often. This can cause some worries about the virus, learning/training, friends, home life, jobs and money.

It is normal to feel anxious and worried about these changes in your lifestyle and workplace routine. There are lots of things you can do to help keep yourself physically and mentally healthy during this transition.

Running a business or returning to work and engaging with others can make you feel frightened, irritable, or just unsettled. You may also feel like you have a lack of control, trouble sleeping or eating, or spend too much time checking symptoms or reading about coronavirus.



Keeping physically safe

PHE guidance: 5 Steps to working safely

1. Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment

Before restarting work you should ensure the safety of the workplace by:

- Carrying out a risk assessment in line with the HSE guidance
- Consulting with your workers or trade unions
- Sharing the results of the risk assessment with your workforce and on your website.

2. Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures

You should increase the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning by:

- Encouraging people to follow the guidance on hand washing and hygiene
- Providing hand sanitiser around the workplace, in addition to washrooms
- Frequently cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly
- Enhancing cleaning for busy areas
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets
- Providing hand drying facilities – either paper towels or electrical dryers

3. Help people to work from home

You should take all reasonable steps to help people work from home by:

- Discussing home working arrangements
- Ensuring they have the right equipment, for example remote access to work systems
- Including them in all necessary communications
- Looking after their physical and mental wellbeing

4. Maintain 2m social distancing, where possible

Where possible, you should maintain 2m between people by:

- Putting up signs to remind workers and visitors of social distancing guidance
- Avoiding sharing workstations
- Using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help people keep to a 2m distance
- Arranging one-way traffic through the workplace if possible
- Switching to seeing visitors by appointment only if possible

5. Where people cannot be 2m apart, manage transmission risk

Where it's not possible for people to be 2m apart, you should do everything practical to manage the transmission risk by:

- Considering whether an activity needs to continue for the business to operate
- Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
- Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
- Using back-to-back or side-to-side working whenever possible
- Staggering arrival and departure times
- Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams of partnering'



Keeping mentally safe

Your mental health is like your physical health and we need to do things to keep it in good shape.

It's really important that you look after yourself physically, emotionally and mentally during this time when we are all experiencing lifestyle changes at home, work and in the community. Below are a few ways you can focus on staying mentally well.

It's OK to not be OK, but make sure you get some help from our [mental wellbeing guidance](#) and follow the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#);

Connect with others

Be active – even if it's just a 10-minute walk

Learn something new, or learn to take a break for yourself

Giving your time to others is a great mood booster

Take notice of your environment – list 5 things you can see/hear/smell/touch

In addition, the following are a few ways you can focus on staying mentally well.

Wellbeing guides

There are lots of things we can do to help protect and promote our mental health and wellbeing, which applies to all ages. [Our guidance](#) shows you how you can do this whilst following the latest Government guidelines.

It's important to take time to relax, eat well, stay hydrated and maintain healthy and active lifestyles that include good quality regular sleeping patterns (e.g. see [Every Mind Matters sleeping page](#)) to support your overall wellbeing.

In addition, the [Mental Health Foundation](#) have provided some simple steps to help your mental wellbeing whilst following the Government's advice.

Talk to someone: It is quite common to feel worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Remember that this is a difficult time for everyone and sharing how you are feeling and the things you are doing to cope with family and friends can help them too. If you don't feel able to do that, there are people you can speak to via [NHS recommended helplines](#) or you could find support groups online to connect with.

Line manager: It is important to consider and discuss the return to work steps you need to take with your line manager. Agreeing these early on may help you to put in place the things you may need to get you back to work. Or if your organisation has this in place, talk to your Human Resources (HR), Personnel/People Development (PD) or Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) who can support you remotely whilst you work from home.

Mental Health First Aider: If your company has trained Mental Health First Aiders or Champions, make a note of their contact details, and get in touch with them if you need to. They can use their skills to support anyone struggling with their mental wellbeing by signposting them to the appropriate support, both in and outside of the workplace. See the [Healthy Cornwall](#) website for more information about the role, and dates for training available to people who live and/or work in Cornwall.

Occupational health: Depending on the size of your company, you may have an occupational health department that can help support you with occupational health services and your mental wellbeing.

Try to manage difficult feelings

Many people find the news about coronavirus (COVID-19) concerning. However, some people may experience such intense anxiety that it becomes a problem. Try to focus on the things you can control, including where you get information from and actions to make yourself feel better prepared.

It is okay to acknowledge some things that are outside of your control right now but constant repetitive thoughts about the situation which lead you to feel anxious or overwhelmed are not helpful. [The Every Mind Matters page on anxiety](#) and NHS [mental wellbeing audio guides](#) provide further information on how to manage anxiety.

Health and wellbeing Apps

Keeping healthy and well is a priority and there are now many apps available to help improve your general wellbeing, from meditation and breathing techniques to managing emotions, and reducing the urge to self-harm. Take a look at some [NHS apps](#) which may help you with your mental well-being.

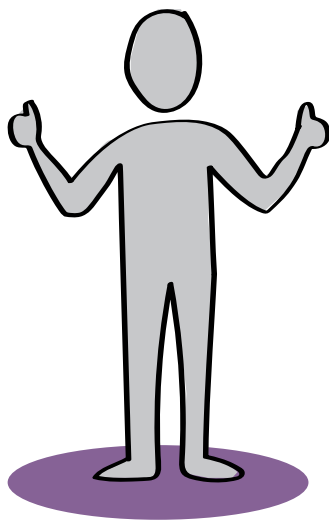
Manage your media and information intake

24-hour news and constant social media updates can make you more worried. If it is affecting you, try to limit the time you spend watching, reading, or listening to media coverage of the outbreak. It may help to only check the news at set times or limiting to a couple of checks a day.

Get the facts

Gather high-quality information that will help you to accurately determine your own or other people's risk of contracting coronavirus (COVID-19) so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as [GOV.UK](#), or the [NHS website](#), and fact check information that you get from newsfeeds, social media or from other people.

Think about how possibly inaccurate information could affect others too. Try not to share information without fact-checking against credible sources.



Think about your new daily routine

Think about how you can adapt and create positive new routines – try to engage in useful activities (such as cleaning, cooking or exercise) or meaningful activities (such as reading or calling a friend). You might find it helpful to write a plan for your day or your week.

Feeling vulnerable or need to speak to someone?

To talk to someone about your mental wellbeing. You can call the 24/7 NHS mental health telephone support, advice and triage help line – 0800 038 5300. Support is available to anyone, regardless of age, all day every day. If you or someone you know feels they need to access urgent mental health support, they will listen to you and assess how best to help.

Your GP or [NHS Direct 111](#) is also available if you need support with your mental wellbeing.

If you are a child/young person under 19 you can call 0800 1111 to talk to Childline or text “SHOUT” to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line, or text “YM”

Useful links

Workplace support

Healthy Workplace

Cornwall Council's Healthy Workplace programme supports businesses to improve their staff health and wellbeing thereby reducing sickness and saving money. They provide advice, training and support to help people stay physically and mentally healthy at work. www.healthycornwall.org.uk/organisations/healthy-workplace/

The Growth Hub

Offering advice to businesses affected by closure. Find links to their advice and their contact details here: www.ciosgrowthhub.com/

Healthy Hospo

Advocacy group seeking to address the issues of poor mental wellbeing that have long been accepted as de facto to a career in hospitality. 1:1 sessions are free to access thanks to a sponsorship partnership. Web: <https://healthyhospo.com/>

Farming Health Hub

The Farming Health Hub is an organisation set up to support Farmers with their mental health, physical health and financial health. Their directory includes a wealth of resources to support with these. <http://farminghealth.co.uk/>

Relate

In partnership with Seafarers UK, Relate is offering up to six free relationship counselling sessions for seafarers and their families. For further information on this contact seafarers@relate.org.uk

Outset Cornwall

Offers support to self-employed people in Cornwall. Contact rosie.laurent@outset.org to find out more.

MindEd

The MindEd Covid-19 resilience hub has been developed to support everyone on the frontline health and care services. <https://covid.minded.org.uk>



Kernow Carers Service

For specialist carers advice provided by Kernow Carers go to the Care and Support in Cornwall website www.supportincornwall.org.uk/kb5/cornwall/directory/carers.page or contact the carers helpline **0800 587 8191 / 01872 323535** open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Email: fis@cornwall.gov.uk

People Hub

People Hub is a telephone hotline that provides residents of Cornwall with critical information in relation to their immediate job and skills concerns. People Hub provides: Immediate information, advice, and guidance; and signposting to organisations and projects with specific expertise and delivery capacity (including other ESF projects, Council services, and voluntary and community support). A telephone hotline 0333 0150699 is available between 10am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, with an out-of-hours messaging service.

[NHS Shielding and Returning to Work Guide](#) is also available.

Training

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training

Mental health awareness training is being delivered by Healthy Cornwall who are accredited with Mental Health First Aid England. This is currently a free MHFA Half Day Awareness course via a digital classroom. It is a four hour introductory session looking at what mental health is, how stigma occurs and explore, at a basic level, some common mental health issues. The course considers how to support someone who is experiencing a mental health issue, as well as watching out for our own wellbeing. To book, please follow this link: www.healthycornwall.org.uk/training/mental-health-first-aid-mhfa/

PHE Psychological first aid in emergencies training for frontline staff and volunteers

Staff and volunteers at the forefront of the national coronavirus response across England will be able to access a new Psychological First Aid (PFA) training course. The free online course enables responders to develop their skills and confidence in providing key psychological support to people affected by coronavirus, including on issues such as job worries, bereavement or isolation as they carry out their vital work as part of the ongoing coronavirus response. It will also help to develop understanding of how emergencies like the coronavirus pandemic can affect us all, how to recognise people who may be at increased risk of distress, and how to offer practical and emotional support.

www.gov.uk/government/news/psychological-first-aid-in-emergencies-training-for-frontline-staff-and-volunteers

There is also an online eHealth module for all frontline and essential workers and volunteers on [FutureLearn](https://www.futurelearn.com).

Cornwall Rural Community Charity (CRCC)

To access one-to-one phone/digital support to help you to get online and to develop digital skills and online streaming, you can either contact Cornwall Link helpline or Digital Inclusion team at CRCC.

Phone: **01872 243557** or **01872 243534**
email: digitalinclusion@cornwall.gov.uk

Mental health support

Safety Planning

A Mental Health Safety Plan is a preventative tool designed to help support those who struggle with mental wellbeing. It may be difficult to think clearly when you feel really low or incredibly overwhelmed. It may be difficult to ignore these feelings. Safety plans are best created **when not in crisis**.

By having a safety plan, you're making sure that there are strategies you can use to keep yourself safe. These can help you feel more in control when everything feels out of control. Think of your safety plan as your 'mental health first-aid kit'. It includes different things that will help you through a crisis. For more advice and support and to download a Safety Plan see our website: www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/mental-health/mental-health-safety-plans/

NHS 24/7 Helpline

To talk to someone about your mental wellbeing you can call the 24/7 NHS mental health telephone support, advice and triage help line -0800 038 5300. Support is available to anyone, regardless of age, all day every day. If you or someone you know feels they need to access urgent mental health support, they will listen to you and assess how best to help.

Outlook South West

Provide free talking therapies for people aged 16+ and suffering with anxiety and depression. Self-referrals can be made online here: www.cornwallft.nhs.uk/outlook-south-west or by calling **01208 871905**. At this time any therapy being delivered will be via telephone or online platform.

Pentreath

A charity in Cornwall who promote good mental health through personal development, education and employment. www.pentreath.co.uk.

Valued Lives

A mental health crisis service in Cornwall
www.valuedlives.co.uk

Mind

If you have to leave your house to go into work during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, it might feel like a difficult and stressful time. This page gives tips for taking care of your mental health and wellbeing, help with understanding difficult feelings, and ways to find support. www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coping-as-a-key-worker

The British Psychological Society

Psychologists from the British Psychological Society have produced guidance for key workers and their children on navigating the emotional effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/psychologists-produce-advice-key-workers-and-their-children

Advice and support services

Citizens Advice Cornwall

Offers free, independent, confidential and impartial advice. Text ADVICE to 7886 or for debt issues text DEBT to 78866 and CA will call you back within 48 hours (excluding weekends). Or call **03444 111444** Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm.

www.citizensadvicecornwall.org.uk

Cornwall Bereavement Network

Provides a list of charities and services able to support those bereaved, from any cause and any age www.cornwallbereavementnetwork.org

We are with you

For information about drugs, alcohol and mental health **01872 263001** or visit www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/cornwall-truro

Safer Futures

Provides information for those affected by domestic abuse, sexual violence and those demonstrating abusive behaviours. Call **0300 777 4777** or visit www.saferfutures.org.uk

National Debt Line

Provides a range of advice and support. Telephone: **0808 808 4000**
www.nationaldebtline.org



Support for vulnerable adults

Disability Cornwall (DIAL)

Provides support across a range of disability enquiries, from health and wellbeing through to money/welfare entitlements, housing, training/volunteering and employment, social/activity opportunities and living independently. Call **01736 759500** or textphone (SMS only) **07522 970336**. www.disabilitycornwall.org.uk

Inclusion Cornwall Hub

Linking you to services and advice across Cornwall when you don't know where to turn. Or when you don't understand the services that are working with you – the Inclusion Cornwall Hub can make sense of it all with you.

Telephone: **01872 326440**

Volunteer Cornwall

Volunteer Cornwall are a charity who support people through voluntary action. They now have an online referral form for their Coronavirus support service (for vulnerable people who need assistance during isolation).

www.volunteercornwall.org.uk/

Social prescribing

Many GP surgeries offer a social prescribing service that helps you access a range of activities to support your wellbeing. Social Prescribing Link Workers are providing 1:1 consultations via telephone or video conferencing during Covid-19. Please contact your GP for further information and to make an appointment.

For more information please contact:
healthy.workplace@cornwall.gov.uk