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Online diary helps NHS and care staff monitor changes in wellbeing and get support

A new online diary has been developed to help health and care staff monitor changes in their wellbeing during the pandemic and signposts where individuals can access help when it is needed.

My Wellbeing Diary is a self-help tool which asks users working in the health and care sectors about various aspects of their feelings each time they log on. It clearly maps out their responses over time to show any changes in their physical or mental health, whether it be a decline or an improvement.

It was co-produced by Northumbria University and the regional [Integrated Care System](#) to support healthcare staff across the North East and North Cumbria to cope with the immense pressures of working during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The diary prompts NHS and care staff to answer questions about their physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing, sleep quality, use of alcohol and drugs, and their feelings towards issues or situations, to help them identify changes in their wellbeing over time.

It signposts to self-help resources and further support to help them to look after their health. Tracking their wellbeing in this way can also help people to identify the things in their life which help to maintain their health and mood.

The diary can be used by individuals working in health and care to self-monitor their own personal wellbeing, and by NHS and care employers who want to proactively help their staff. All data entered into the tool by employees is anonymous and is collated to give organisations oversight of general wellbeing patterns within their business, such as increased levels of stress in certain areas at various times.

The diary was developed to a NHS specification by Dr Petia Sice and [Dr Garry Elvin](#), experts in wellbeing informatics in Northumbria University's [Department of Computer and Information Sciences](#) and the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System.

Angela Kennedy, Mental Health Lead at the Northern England Clinical Network explained: "We know that this is the most challenging period the NHS has ever experienced, and it might take its toll on staff. Self-reflection via diary is a proven way to improve wellbeing. NHS-England are concerned that our staff are at risk of burnout and fatigue – even post-traumatic stress disorder in some cases.

"We wanted to do something to give people the power to monitor how they are doing over time, that was not about mental 'illness' and notice any patterns that may be emerging. From there, we can provide them with information on additional support they can access for themselves. Where it is being used within organisations, we can assess how cohorts of staff are feeling and provide appropriate support for the whole group or target specific

problems that emerge from the data over time.”

[Dr Petia Sice](#) added: “We developed a model and tool for evaluating wellbeing that uses a self-led contemplative approach to examine physical, emotional and relational awareness in the present moment.

“Thanks to previous work with Angela and our NHS partners, we were able to work together to further develop the tool to help users identify and understand patterns in a number of aspects of their health.”

Health and care services staff wanting to find out more about the diary can contact paras.patel1@nhs.net for more information.

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