VIP: Accessing Wellbeing Support

The Valuing Individuals and Performance (VIP) approach encourages line managers and employees to have regular conversations that support an employee’s wellbeing. VIP coaching tools such as the “Blob Tree” and the “Stress container” are designed to stimulate initial discussions about an employee’s wellbeing, workload and mental health.

Conversations about Wellbeing matter, but what is equally important is that when it is discovered that employees are struggling, they receive the support they need. This document provides a summary of how to access the current support packages available within CCC.

Sources of support

Online Support**:** Full details of where you can go for help and advice can be found here:

<http://www.intouch.ccc/intouch_landing_page/employeesupport.asp>

Workplace Wellbeing Champions - The council have various workplace wellbeing champions across the authority who can provide support and advice to staff.

All of the Workplace Wellbeing Champions can be contacted by staff who have any queries or concerns regarding their health. The champions are not councillors and they do not take the place of professionally trained staff. They can however provide advice, support or signposting to additional support depending on the circumstances. In many cases it is simply having someone to talk to.

Workplace Wellbeing Champions fall under the following categories and the individual’s can be accessed via the links below:

**Health Advocates** - Health Advocates help us to promote various physical and mental health initiatives and activities amongst their own teams, and are able to signpost you to help and support.  For more information and a list of health advocates visit <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing/betterhealth/default.asp>

**Time to Change Champions and Mental Health First Aiders**

**Time to Change Champions**-Support the Time to Change campaign which aims to reduce stigma and discrimination around mental health. They are often people who have their own direct or indirect experience of mental health problems, or a particular interest in this area.

**Mental Health First Aiders** Mental Health First Aid is an accredited course which was designed by Mental Health England. It gives an in depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect well-being, and teaches practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues.

Once trained Mental Health First Aiders should be able to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental ill health and be equipped with the skills and knowledge to support colleagues with any mental health related problems.

A list of Time to Change Champions and Mental Health First Aiders can be found here:

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing/timetochange.asp>

Wellbeing action plan

There are small steps that employees can take in order to manage their mental wellbeing in the workplace, with the right support from their line manager. The Wellbeing Action Plan (WAP) is a simple and easy to use tool for line managers and employees to introduce in order to maintain a positive mentality. This is a tool that everyone can use and are not specific to individuals with a diagnosed mental health problem. For further information please see the [Mind website](https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/employer-resources/wellness-action-plan-download/) which contains guides on the WAP for both employees and line managers: <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/employer-resources/wellness-action-plan-download/>

Stress Management

Stress is something that has a significant effect on individuals but can often be overlooked. High levels of stress can damage health, with stress a significant factor in mental health problems, anxiety, depression and links to physical health problems like heart disease, problems with the immune system, insomnia and digestive problems.

The causes of stress (stressors) are unique to individuals and their personal circumstances but can also be rooted from within the workplace. It is important to identify and explore these causes in order to address them and seek support to reduce stress levels. The following is a list of possible stressors to think about when assessing personal stress levels or when having a discussion with a line manager or colleague; these are based on the 6 key areas of possible workplace pressures identified by the Health and Safety Executive but can apply to external factors.

* Demands in the workplace and at home – this can be workload or competing priorities
* Clarity on roles and responsibilities within the workplace and what is expected behaviour
* Autonomy over job role and decision making within the workplace
* Change - the level of change happening either at work or in personal lives, an individual’s ability to deal with this and the manage the effect on them accordingly
* Support – individuals have different support networks, these could be limited to managers and colleagues but can extend to family and friends; all circumstances are different
* Relationships – positive working and personal relationships can be a source of support in difficult times. However, poor working or personal relationships can be a cause of stress. Consideration should be given on how to build and maintain positive relationships and how to deal with any issues in an appropriate manner.

The corporate health and safety team hold further information and guidance, on the management of work-related stress and possible sources of support, including HSE resources for line managers, the Individual Stress Questionnaire and the Council Stress Risk Assessment. Please visit the [Management of Work Related Stress](http://www.intouch.ccc/healthandsafety/stress.asp) page on the Corporate Health and Safety pages or via the following link: <http://www.intouch.ccc/healthandsafety/stress.asp>

For further information on the effects of pressure and stress on mental health and techniques for building personal resilience, the [Wellbeing, resilience and managing stress](https://cumbria.learningpool.com/course/view.php?id=852) e-learning is now available on My Learning via the following link: <https://cumbria.learningpool.com/course/view.php?id=852>

In addition, there is an e-learning package for line managers which covers key areas of pressures that could cause harm to individuals if not well managed. It details workplace procedures and good practice management approaches to support the management of the risk of stress occurring in the workplace. [This Managing Work-Related Stress- a guide for managers](https://cumbria.learningpool.com/course/view.php?id=853) is also available on My Learning or via the following link: <https://cumbria.learningpool.com/course/view.php?id=853>