

Achieving Balance

Staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy

2022 - 2024



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Foreword

Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust delivers high quality care to our patients and service users from within the Gateshead community and further afield. We achieve this in no small part, thanks to the compassion, knowledge, commitment and skills of our workforce.

The last two years have been extremely challenging for all NHS services nationwide, and our own organisation is no exception. We have faced a rapidly changing health landscape, worked at pace to implement innovative solutions to difficult challenges, and have done so with a workforce which is exhausted and depleted.

The people who make up our workforce have been nothing short of amazing during our pandemic response, stepping up in a way that no one could have planned for. They have worked in ways and in roles that have stretched and challenged teams and individuals. They have done so in a way that has been supportive, collaborative and has shown real care for each other.

Many of our people say that working at Gateshead is like being part of a family, and this really is the case for most, but needs to be the case for all. Our staff family is now stretched to, and in some cases beyond, what is reasonable to maintain. Many need to reflect, unwind and reset.

We know that where NHS organisations prioritise staff health and wellbeing, and actively include staff in developing work in this area, levels of engagement increase along with morale, loyalty, innovation and productivity.

Our aim is to make Gateshead Health a happy and healthy place to work for everyone who works here. We want Gateshead to be a place where people want to come and work, and then choose to stay. If we can attract and retain high quality staff, it follows that patient care will be positively impacted.

As we hopefully move out of the worst stages of the Covid-19 pandemic we need to find a way to ensure the care and compassion our staff have shown to their patients and each other, continues to be shown to them.

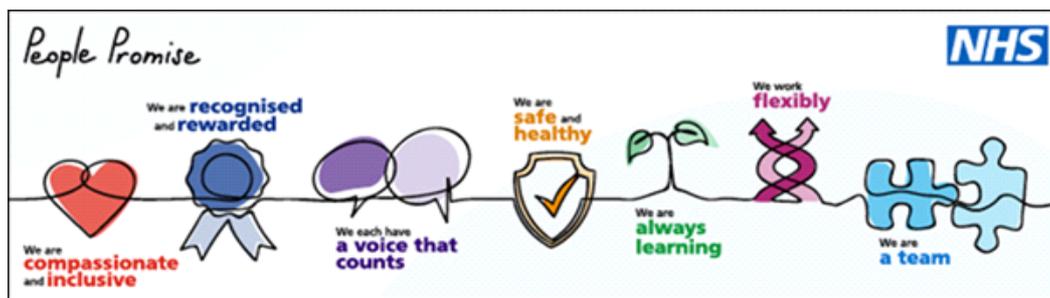
This health and wellbeing strategy is the start of that recovery, and working with colleagues from across the organisation, we will develop a workforce fit for the future.

Lisa Crichton-Jones
Executive Director of People and OD

Ruth Bonnington
Health and wellbeing Guardian

Background and Context

The health and wellbeing of our staff has been in sharp focus during the pandemic response, particularly within those groups disproportionately affected by Covid. Yet we have known since long before the Covid-19 pandemic that staff who are happy and healthy at work, provide high quality care to patients – and that includes people who are not just in clinical, patient facing roles, but in those vital support services too. A happy and healthy workforce results in, and is a result of, a healthy organisational culture – so this is wider than simply having effective health and wellbeing support and interventions. This is about having those things as part of a holistic approach to a healthy organisation.



The NHS People Plan was published in 2020, identifying that our people are our greatest asset. A key theme within the plan is 'Looking after our People' and whilst that can mean different things to different people, what is clear is that there is more to be done to ensure that our people feel valued, want to stay with our organisation, and indeed in the NHS more widely.

The People Plan also offers the opportunity to open up discussions about flexible working. We know that different generations have differing needs when it comes to how they work. If we are unable to meet those needs, again we will find that our people will choose to look outside of Gateshead Health for different career opportunities.

We are all working for longer, and for many of us that offers a greater opportunity to further our careers, or even to try more than one career. However, it also means that we might have different needs as we get older – many of the roles within the NHS are physically demanding, and so we need to think about the impact of that on how we go about our day to day activities. We might have different caring responsibilities such as caring for elderly relatives as we get older. We might have new health challenges as we get older – they may not keep us from working, but we might need to work a little differently.

Our workforce is approximately 80% female, and with that comes the probability that at any one time, around a quarter of our workforce may be experiencing the symptoms of peri-menopause and menopause. We need to understand how this can impact on the wellbeing of our workforce, and how we can support those people – women and other people who may be experiencing menopausal symptoms or who are affected by symptoms – to work in a way that supports their wellbeing, not make it worse.

Our workforce is made up of a diverse group of people, who each have differing individual needs. If this strategy is to be effective, inclusive, and most importantly useful to our people at every level of the organisation, it must be a strategy for all.

We have thriving staff networks within Gateshead Health, whose aim is to improve the experience of every member of staff, no matter their background. It is vital that we listen to the lived experiences of our network members, and all of our colleagues who may experience health and wellbeing support in a way that is contrary to how we would intend.

We know that members of minority groups both in society in general and in our own organisation – often have worse experiences than white, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied people when it comes to health and wellbeing support. Whilst our networks are a guiding light in terms of helping us to see these experiences through a different lens, the responsibility for making our services, resources and support adaptable and culturally sensitive lies very much with the organisation itself, and not with the people who generously share their knowledge with us.

For all of these reasons and more, we must place staff health and wellbeing at the very heart of our organisational plans for the coming years.

What do we mean by Health and Wellbeing?

Health and wellbeing means different things to different people at different times in their lives.

- It includes our physical health – but not just that
- It includes our mental health – but not just that
- It includes financial health - but not just that
- It includes feeling accepted to be ourselves and to bring our full self to work – but not just that

It includes all of these things and so much more. There is no single solution to providing a good health and wellbeing offer within our organisation. A holistic approach, working across multiple teams, including every area of the organisation is essential in order to develop the healthy culture that is needed for our people to thrive.

For health and wellbeing to make a difference, it must become part of an organisations core culture, support sustainable change and be an organisational priority with staff and leaders ‘walking the walk’ and being seen and supported to do so.

Corporate strategy

As outlined within Gateshead Health’s 2022 - 2025 corporate strategy, our people are our greatest asset. Caring for the health and wellbeing of our people is a priority focus area identified within strategy. Accordingly, the strategy identifies a number of key metrics for the measurement of performance in this respect. It is important to note that these measurements are indicators of staff health and wellbeing as opposed to aims.

Within the corporate strategy, the organisation commits to support the health and wellbeing of staff by:

- Offering the health and wellbeing support that our people need to keep them resilient, safe and well - physically, mentally, emotionally and socially
- Seeking to create healthy environments for our people to work in
- Providing our people with the flexibility that they need and protecting their time so they can rest, learn and connect with others
- Continuing to take the time to acknowledge and recognise the hard work and efforts of our people
- Celebrating our achievements and accomplishments.

The organisation’s staff health and wellbeing strategy aims to encompass these commitments. The strategy also serves to outline how the above commitments appear as actions and changes mapped to the NHS England HWB Framework.

The National Context

In November 2021, a new NHS England HWB Framework was launched, which built on previous iterations of this model, and also considered the holistic approach to health and wellbeing which is demanded by the NHS People Promise as part of the NHS People Plan. (See Appendix 1)

What is clear from this new model, is that health and wellbeing doesn't 'belong' to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing team – health and wellbeing is everyone's business, across all job roles, and all areas of the organisation.

A key strategic aim of Gateshead Health is that "We will be a great organisation with a highly engaged workforce". This Staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy will provide a framework on which we will draw on to deliver this theme, and which will enable our staff to achieve 'Balance'.

What is our starting point?

Health and wellbeing isn't new to Gateshead, but the focus on this area has increased both nationally and locally during and following Covid-19 peaks. There are pockets of good practice across the Trust, but it is not always consistent. Our aim in developing this strategy is that no matter where you work in the organisation, what your role is, if you are clinical or not, that everyone will have equal access to relevant HWB opportunities which support their individual needs.



What does our data tell us?

We use a range of measures to tell us about the wellbeing of our people, including anecdotal evidence. Some of the 'hard' data helps us to paint a picture which supports those very personal stories, and allows us to understand where best to focus our efforts.

From the 2021 annual national staff survey we have a feel for how staff view the organisation's approach to health and wellbeing. **61% of respondents agreed that the organisation takes positive action on health and wellbeing**, which compares to 56% nationally. However this still leaves 39% of our people who don't agree that we take positive action on health and wellbeing – there is more to do. Particularly when 14% of survey respondents completely disagreed with that statement.

11a. My organisation takes positive action on health and well-being.	2020		2021		Comparator	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly disagree	-	-	85	5%	10,653	5%
Disagree	-	-	173	9%	23,263	11%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-	467	25%	60,249	28%
Agree	-	-	863	47%	93,418	44%
Strongly agree	-	-	250	14%	24,666	12%
Missing	-	-	35		3,774	
Positive Score	-	-		61%		56%
Negative Score	-	-		14%		16%
Base	-	-		1,838		212,249

Additionally, the data relating to our 3 staff networks is different. For staff who have indicated that they belong to one of three minority groups, the percentage of respondents who believe that the organisation takes positive action on health and wellbeing reports as:

- LGBT - 49%
- D-Ability - 57%
- BAME - 65%

It is important then to ensure that any health and wellbeing support is inclusive for all members of staff, and if not, is tailored appropriately.

We also have a cohort of staff with significant support needs around their mental and physical health. We know the NHS overall has higher absence rates among staff due to stress, anxiety and depression than in any other sector and there has been an increase in staff reporting mental ill health since the outbreak of Covid-19.

The 2021 NHS annual survey results nationally and for Gateshead revealed that **48% of staff report feeling unwell as the result of work-related stress**, which despite being in line with the benchmarking data, still means that almost 50% of respondents are affected.

Our staff network data for the same question is:

- LGBT+ - 51%
- D-Ability - 61%
- BAME - 50%

The NHS England quarterly People Pulse survey is a new survey within the Trust, and despite a large increase in participation in early 2022, at the time of writing it remains at under 500 responses. However, a targeted campaign aligning it to the annual survey, and offering timely responses to feedback should ensure that more of our people participate.

The responses we did supported the national data, in that **57.5% of respondents felt that the 'organisation is proactively supporting my health and wellbeing'**. However, the top three themes that people wanted managers and leaders to know at the time of completing the survey were:

- Colleagues are overworked/tired/workload is too high
- Hire more staff/improve resourcing
- Colleagues are experiencing anxiety/poor mental health

And finally, in the latest health needs assessment which was carried out in Autumn 2021, the top three things that our people told us they wanted to change or improve were:

- Weight
- Work-Life Balance
- Stress levels

Additionally, as part of the health needs assessment, there was a strong call for improved facilities, particularly at our Bensham site, and an improved physical health programme including nutrition and exercise. Whilst some of the suggested improvements are challenging (installing an on-site gym for example) others are easier to implement, and form part of the 'getting the basics right' work stream (introducing 24/7 hot food for example).

It's clear from these results, as well as sickness absence data which reveals that around 35% (consistently) of total sickness absence is due to stress, anxiety and depression, that our number one priority is to improve and then maintain a high quality, robust and timely psychological support measures.

Governance Structure



HWB Programme Board Structure, September 2022

In Spring 2021 a Health and Wellbeing Programme Board was established, reporting directly to the People and OD Portfolio Board. This Board aims to provide focus and a contextual understanding of the HWB challenges within the organisation, as well as drive forward specific work streams of activity. These work streams will evolve as we move throughout the period of this strategy, although the main focus will remain the health, safety and ability of our people to thrive at work.

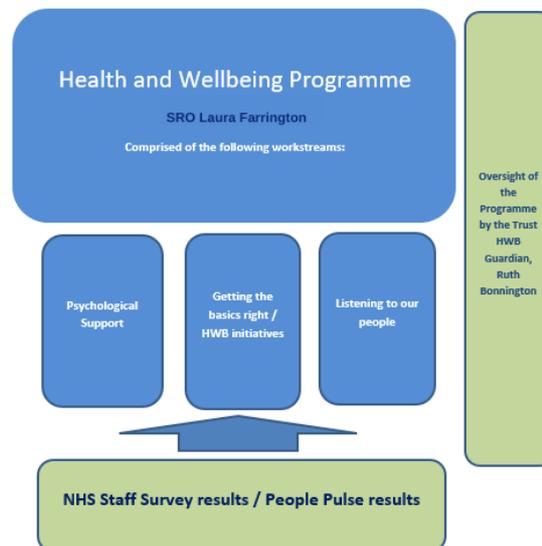
In early 2022, and as part of the development of this strategy a review of the work streams within the HWB programme plan was undertaken. Much of the initial work of the HWB Programme Board had focussed on supporting our people during the pandemic, and much of the output of those initial work streams has become 'business as usual'. At this stage in the pandemic recovery, it is right that the focus shifts to sustainability – how do we continue with the good work which has already happened to ensure that HWB support continues in a sustainable way throughout the organisation, and how do we ensure that we are focussed on the things which matter to our people.

After data analysis plus discussion and engagement with key stakeholders, the recurring themes are:

- **Psychological support** – how do we ensure that the psychological support we offer to people is robust and timely?
- **Listening to our people** – what are their experiences of the last 2 years and how can we harness these experiences?
- **Getting the basics right** – ensuring that things which may seem basic such as food provision, space for breaks, taking annual leave etc. are given priority and not forgotten about in the wider HWB offer.

It is also clear that in order to inform this work, we must use the rich data that we receive from both the annual NHS Staff Survey, and the Quarterly People Pulse survey. Both surveys offer an insight into what impact our work is having; what we're getting right and importantly, where we need to do more work.

This has then informed the new workstreams which sit within the HWB Programme Plan from April 2022 onwards:



HWB Programme Board Structure, September 2022

Balance at Gateshead

We employ circa 4,200 staff, in both patient facing roles and in roles which support our services in order for the organisation to run well. We also support students and junior doctors in training on site, as well as our volunteers and bank staff. Our teams work from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital site, Bensham Hospital site, community teams, home workers and staff that support our QEF team to deliver services across England.

We have a diverse workforce and accordingly health and wellbeing will mean different things to different people.

After much engagement with our people, it was clear that what people wanted was a sense of balance within their wellbeing. They have worked extremely hard in difficult circumstances during our pandemic response, and for some members of our Gateshead workforce, this has meant that other areas of their lives have been adversely impacted. People told us that they want to come to work and work hard, be

valued, be effective and make a difference. But they also wanted to have a life outside of work, and to feel healthy enough to enjoy it.

Many of our staff told us that they are still coming to terms with the events since March 2020, and the resultant changes to their work and home lives, as well as their physical and emotional health.

We have staff who:

- have worked outside of their usual roles to support Covid patients, and have had to make decisions the like of which they have never faced before
- are tired both physically and emotionally, with some requiring psychological support
- have been required to shield for long periods of the pandemic
- have worked from home for almost 2 years
- have had Covid-19 and have long term health problems as a result
- have been redeployed into new and challenging roles
- found managing an existing long term health condition or disability challenging as a result of the impact of Covid on work and home
- have lost loved ones, friends and family members and of course patients too

There is an overwhelming feeling that staff need time, support and to be allowed to recover and reset, whilst still aiming to achieve the organisations objectives

Taking all of this into consideration, we were delighted to launch our new Balance branding for our HWB Programme in July 2021. It has fast become a widely recognised symbol throughout the organisation of help, information and guidance to support health and wellbeing.



Equality, diversity and inclusion

Due consideration should be always taken to ensure that Gateshead's health and wellbeing offerings are inclusive to the individual needs and cultural sensitivities of all colleagues. Data highlights that experiences and perceptions of health and wellbeing efforts currently differ significantly for those from minority backgrounds.

All health and wellbeing efforts should involve consultation with diverse stakeholder groups to ensure that support, offerings and initiatives are accessible and appropriate to all. Where a particular offering may not be suitable to all, discussion should focus on how the provision of reasonable adjustments or alternative arrangements could help create equity, helping to provide suitable support for all.

To increase accountability in respect of ensuring an inclusive health and wellbeing offering, data captured from annual staff surveys will act as performance metrics. The organisation's Human Rights Equality Diversity and Inclusion Programme Board regularly meet to discuss and track this data,

ensuring a compatible approach to performance tracking. We will derive performance and progression from scoring captured under the collection of questions categorised as:

- We are compassionate and inclusive - Diversity and Equality
- We are compassionate and inclusive – Inclusion
- We are safe and healthy – health and safety climate

Furthermore, we will segment these results by personal characteristics to provide a more in-depth understanding of results and potential focus areas. These will include, but not be limited to ethnic background, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation.

The NHS England HWB Framework – 7 areas of focus

The new framework clearly sets out the areas which will have most impact upon the health and wellbeing of the people who work in our organisation. We have made good progress in some of these areas. However, it is clear that in some areas, there is still considerable work to do in order for our people to achieve ‘Balance’.



1. Environment

“Workers need a work environment in which there is not only an absence of harmful conditions that can cause injury and illness, but one that supports healthy choices and offers resources to actively encourage healthy behaviour” - NHS Health and Wellbeing Strategic Overview, 2021

It has become apparent during the course of the pandemic response that some of our estate is not being utilised effectively. It is also acknowledged that there has been a significant impact on estate usage due to a large proportion of the workforce working from home.

Patients have high expectations of the environment in which they receive their care, and talented recruits know that they can choose to work in organisations where the environment supports their wellbeing.

For all of these reasons and more, a wide ranging estates strategy is currently being developed which will address all of these areas.

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
Installed a range of outside seating areas at both QEH and BGH sites, in areas which are shielded from visitors to both sites.	Open a Listening Space on site at QEH, offering a quiet reflective space for staff to use which is away from the work place. It will also offer a range of HWB activities for staff to access throughout the week, both during the day and early evening. (Year 1)

Improved the menu choices within the catering establishments at QEH, including healthier options such as vegetarian, vegan as well as specific dietary requirements e.g. halal, kosher.	Provide an innovative 24/7 catering offer on site at QEH, to enable staff who work out of hours to access hot food during all shifts. (Year 1)
Widened the range of menu options available at BGH to include more hot food options.	Improve the catering experience – both the environment and the menu choices – at BGH (Year 2)
	Improve the information we give to staff about healthy eating, allowing them to make healthy choices at work, but also to inform their choices at home. (Year 2)



2. Professional Wellbeing Support

The teams which support the wellbeing of the workforce are not simply limited to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Team. However, these professional teams and services should be robust and effectively resourced, to enable appropriate expertise involvement in the development of an integrated health and wellbeing strategy.

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
Undergone a full review of the Occupational Health Service, to expand to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service, ensuring a more holistic approach to support.	Introduce focussed psychology support, with the recruitment of a Clinical Psychologist for staff for staff referrals, as well as supporting other areas of support with appropriate supervision e.g. Mental Health First Aiders, and through proactive measures such as the completion of stress risk assessments. Additionally, review the support that Talkworks have provided since July 2020, which has been critical in supporting the psychological needs of some of our staff, but which is costly, and therefore unsustainable in the longer term. (Year 1 & 2)
Consolidated the testing and vaccination services into their permanent ‘homes’; vaccinations within Occupational Health and Wellbeing; testing within Pathology.	Reinvigorate the physiotherapy support for staff, with the recruitment of a Physiotherapist who will be focussed on staff referrals, and who will maintain strong links with the Trust Physiotherapy service. (Year 1)

Maintained the PCAS service in a form that keeps our staff safe, and offers the best advice and up to date guidance and PPE.	Ensure that on-site vaccinations for staff, including for Covid-19, remain available, or that suitable alternative options are provided as appropriate (for example, when demand for Covid-19 vaccination falls.) (Years 1-3)
Reviewed and improved the manager referral process into Occupational Health and Wellbeing, with full stakeholder involvement.	Agree the longer term sustainability of the Health and Wellbeing Team, which is currently employed on a fixed term basis. (Years 2-3)



3. Data Insights

“Good data and robust analysis are fundamental to knowing where to focus your health and wellbeing interventions... (and) enables you to measure whether they are having the desired impact or not.” - NHS Health and Wellbeing Strategic Overview, 2021

We will continuously improve our understanding of the health and wellbeing needs of our people by the use of data and feedback. Historically we have had limited feedback from relation to HWB and have had poor engagement with the Staff Survey and Pulse surveys.

However, the most recent quarterly and annual staff surveys have both had highest ever response rates, following dedicated and focussed work to improve participation. This is a trend which we hope to continue as we ensure that the feedback loop is closed quickly, leading to an understanding amongst our people that taking the time to give us their views can make a difference to their employee experience.

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
Completed a local health needs assessment as part of our successful accreditation for the North East Better Health at Work Award.	Improve the participation rate of the quarterly Pulse Survey, acknowledging that ‘survey fatigue’ is a real thing, but understanding that this <u>real time feedback</u> is extremely valuable in determining local focus of effort. (Years 1-3)
Added a number of local HWB specific questions to the annual NHS Staff Survey.	Implement an effective feedback mechanism for emerging themes from the HWB Check-ins (Years 1-2)
Developed a HWB early Warning Dashboard, highlighting key areas of staff absence, including type specific absence, starters and leavers, and Occupational Health data.	Complete the NHS England HWB Framework self-assessment (Years 1-2)

Launched HWB Check-ins for all staff	Engage with staff networks and staff side directly to ensure that anecdotal evidence is heard and triangulated with more formal data. (Years 1-3)
Participated in the monthly (now quarterly) Pulse Survey	



4. Managers and Leaders

“Our managers and leaders are fundamental to creating positive and healthy working environments for our diverse NHS people. This includes the responsibilities of senior leaders, what healthy behaviours look like for the leaders across our organisations and the importance of skilled and supported managers in helping to build and sustain cultures of health and wellbeing.” - NHS Health and Wellbeing Strategic Overview, 2021

Often, the experience of an employee depends wholly on their relationship with their line manager. An organisation can have the best policies, procedures, health and wellbeing initiatives imaginable, but if the line manager does not lead from a position of compassion, then often those supportive policies cannot do the things they were intended to do.

There is an oft-quoted saying that ‘people don’t leave organisations, they leave poor managers’. Whilst the reality of that can be argued to be true or otherwise, it is widely agreed that when employees don’t feel valued by the managers in their organisation, engagement is lower, morale is lower, productivity suffers, sickness absence increases and staff turnover rates increase.

The wider leadership and management development work within Gateshead is being led by a newly formed OD Team, who will align to specific business units, and who will support Trust-wide development to develop our leaders and managers. It is important to note that this work will not be done in silo, but will be as a result of collaborative working throughout the People and OD Team, as well as with operational colleagues.

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
HWB Check-ins	Launch the ‘Leading Well at Gateshead’ Programme for all managers and leaders, with the golden thread of HWB and ED&I woven through each element. (Year 1)
Delivered compassionate HWB conversation training to managers.	Encourage managers to role model behaviours such as planning and taking annual leave, not working excessive hours regularly and thus making it ‘the norm’, and taking regular breaks – acknowledging the importance of doing so.

	(Years 1-3)
Launched the new 'Managing Well at Gateshead' programme for managers, with the golden thread of HWB and ED&I woven through each element.	As part of the wider recruitment and retention work, aim to build capacity into rotas to enable staff to attend activities outside of the normal job role, such as training and HWB activities.
	(Years 1-2)
Started our Compassionate Leadership work, led by the OD Team, and encompassing work around a Just Culture.	Aim to enable all Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors to have one hour each week of protected time, in order for them to carry out HWB activity.
	(Years 1-2)
Engaged our Chief Nurse as a Health and Wellbeing Ambassador for the Executive Team, as well providing leadership and 'permission' for this work amongst other teams.	Working with POD Leads, ask all business units to include HWB as a regular agenda item at Business Unit, Departmental and Team meetings.
	(Years 1-2)
	Ensure that as part of the Leading Well at Gateshead programme that managers understand that they have 'permission to act' in terms of supporting people in their teams.
	(Years 1-2)



5. Relationships

“Extensive evidence shows that having good-quality relationships can help us to live longer and happier lives with fewer mental health problems. Having close, positive relationships can give us a purpose and sense of belonging” - NHS Health and Wellbeing Strategic Overview, 2021.

Just as supportive managers are vital to the overall employee experience, the relationships we have with our managers, our immediate colleagues, and with people from the wider organisation can all impact upon how happy we feel at work.

If relationships are strained, dis-trustful, antagonistic and unfriendly, then work becomes a place where we don't want to be. Conversely, if we feel supported by our colleagues, if we feel that we can be vulnerable and open to new ideas and ways of working, if we feel that we can our true self at work, then it becomes a place where we can thrive.

Often we are told that Gateshead is like a family – but even the closest families have difficulties, and so when those difficulties arrive we need to be able to support our people to resolve differences in a mature and 'just' way.

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
Implemented our Trust ICORE values; Innovation, Care, Openness, Respect,	Review the Bullying and Harassment (B&H) support that we offer, including the B&H advisors.

Engagement; along with the associated desired behaviours	Ensure that if the service is useful and effective, that the advisors reflect the diversity of our workforce. (Year 2)
Continued to provide a bespoke internal mediation service, to provide support when relationships break down	Launch the 'Leading Well at Gateshead' programme, with sessions focussed on areas such as behaviours, engagement, team development, and communication (Year 1)
Launched the 'Managing Well at Gateshead' programme, with sessions focussed on areas such as behaviours, engagement, team development, and communication	Review the internal mediation service to understand the impact of that work, and whether it will be beneficial to train more staff to carry out this role. (Year 1-2)
Trained a number of cultural ambassadors who are available to support colleagues from our diverse workforce in areas such as disciplinary hearings.	Develop a 'Just Culture' at Gateshead, to ensure that a culture of fairness, openness and learning is felt by all staff. (Years 1-3)
Continued to support the work of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, and promoted the service widely.	Develop a network of Freedom to Speak Up Champions who will be a touchpoint for staff to get signposting and support. (Year 2)



6. Improving personal health and wellbeing

“This section thinks about the proactive interventions and services that empower our NHS people to manage their own health and wellbeing. Personal health is more than the absence of dysfunction and disease. Mental and emotional health, physical health and a healthy lifestyle all contribute to an individual’s health and wellbeing” - NHS Health and Wellbeing Strategic Overview, 2021

The development of a small but active HWB Team, has resulted in a range of activities becoming part of the day to day offering. There are regular engagement events (always Covid-dependent) and activities which our people are able to access as and when they have a specific need. This day to day activity enables our people to be proactive about their own wellbeing, and allows the organisation to respond in a timely way to the changing needs of our workforce.

Routes into self-help are promoted regularly, including from the regional ICS Staff Wellbeing Hub. A newly developed website will enable staff to access this signposting away from the workplace, enabling those staff who may find it difficult to access time at a PC during work time – or who simply prefer to access support in their own time.

This is about more than simply reducing sickness absence – an active HWB events calendar and routes into support will promote a healthy environment at work, but must be seen as one part of the HWB approach, not the full solution.

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
<p>Focussed attention on Menopause support, including regular menopause peer support drop in sessions (the Menopause Café); offered training to staff and managers; developed guidance for staff and managers.</p>	<p>A number of staff will be trained as Menopause Champions, to be a point of contact for staff who may need to be signposted to further support. Develop a Menopause Policy, to ensure fair and consistent support across the Trust.</p> <p><i>(Year 1)</i></p>
<p>Worked with Citizen’s Advice Gateshead to develop a direct access route into support, advice and guidance. This service enables staff to ‘queue jump’ and speak to an advisor within 24 hours of an enquiry.</p>	<p>Provide timely and responsive support to themes that emerge as the wider data collection work – from health needs assessments; from HWB Check-in themes; from Pulse survey results; from annual staff survey results.</p> <p><i>(Years 1-3)</i></p>
<p>Offered convenient, on-site access to vaccinations, not just for Covid-19, but flu and other relevant vaccines.</p>	<p>Develop a Working Carers Support Group, using the same model as the Menopause support group, to enable working carers to come together and offer peer support, as well as access professional support.</p> <p><i>(Year 1)</i></p>
<p>Partnered with Salary Finance to offer financial education, simple savings, and affordable loans, including short term loans – helping staff to avoid high interest ‘pay day loans’.</p>	<p>The HWB Programme Board will explore whether it would be beneficial for all staff to have a personal HWB objective within their appraisal - linked to the HWB check-in.</p> <p><i>(Years 1-2)</i></p>
<p>Developed a comprehensive range of routes into self-help which is promoted on the HWB pages of StaffZone, as well as being produced as a resource for managers as part of the HWB Check-in Materials.</p>	



7. Fulfilment at work

“Fulfilment at work encompasses not only the work we do on a day-to-day basis but a range of themes and activities that together form a critical component of an individual’s health and wellbeing. This includes enabling the diversity of our NHS people to bring their whole self to work, enabling life balance,

and helping our talented people reach their full potential” - NHS Health and Wellbeing Strategic Overview, 2021.

The health and wellbeing of our people is not a linear, one dimensional state. A holistic approach to health and wellbeing – as demonstrated by this framework – will ensure that we are supporting the whole person. An essential component of being able to thrive at work, and in life in general, is the feeling of being accepted as we are – so we must ensure that we have the processes in place which allow our people to thrive no matter their background. Our diverse workforce should each have equitable opportunities to grow and develop at work, bringing with them the richness of their experiences.

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
Three staff networks are now well established within the Trust, with a fourth in its infancy. Representatives from the networks support not only network specific work, but also have influence and stakeholder involvement with Trust-wide pieces of work.	Review our flexible working practices, and enable our people to think differently about how they work. (Years 2-3)
Delivered a number of ‘Thank you’ events and gestures such as the free ice cream van, festive hampers, free drinks and snacks, and a £250 HWB bonus payment for every member of staff.	Design jobs which reflect the way in which a modern organisation works, embracing digital technology to enable more agile ways of working. (Years 2-3)
Recognise outstanding achievements in an annual award ceremony – The Star Awards – as well as smaller acts of behaviour or achievements which demonstrate people living our ICORE values day to day, with the monthly You’re a Star process.	Continue to offer a range of activities to support staff morale including physical activities, support groups, and a range of other activities depending on staff interests. For example: Weekly choir; annual walking challenge; annual 5-a-side football tournament. (Years 1-3)
Launched Schwartz Rounds and Team Time, as a way for individuals and teams to examine the emotional impact of working in healthcare.	

How do the 7 framework themes link with our own workstreams?

In developing the 3 initial workstreams within this strategy, they reflect not only the feedback and data from our own organisation, but also the national framework themes.

Workstream	NHSE HWB Framework Theme						
	Environment	Professional Wellbeing Support	Data Insights	Managers and Leaders	Relationships	Improving Personal Health	Fulfilment at work
Psychological Support		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Getting the basics right/ HWB Initiatives	✓		✓			✓	
Listening to our people		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

HWB infrastructure

Underpinning and supporting this work, are three key areas of work:

- Health and Wellbeing Check-ins
- Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors
- Communication

Health and Wellbeing Check-ins

First introduced in September 2020, these check-ins (or HWB conversations) are an opportunity for managers, or another appropriate colleague, to check in on an individual and find out how they are.

“From September 2020, every member of the NHS should have a health and wellbeing conversation and develop a personal plan. These conversations may fit within an appraisal, job plan or one-to-one line management discussion, and should be reviewed at least annually. As part of this conversation, line managers will be expected to discuss the individual’s health and wellbeing, and any flexible working requirements, as well as equality, diversity and inclusion.” - NHS People Plan, 2020-21

The aim of these check-ins is not to provide specialist advice – we do not expect our managers to be GPs, financial advisors, nutritional experts, stop smoking advisors. We do however expect that managers will know where to signpost members of staff to, whether a referral into Occupational Health may be needed, or whether a change to working arrangements may be useful – even for a short period of time.

During 2022, to offer assurance to staff, and to relevant stakeholders that these check-ins are taking place regularly, we will be asking managers to confirm the check in has taken place as part of the appraisal documentation.

Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors

Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors (HWBAs) are key in building the bridge between the central, corporate HWB work, and the reality of what's happening 'on the ground'.

Since July 2020, a growing network of HWBAs have supported the work of the HWB Team, as well as driving local initiatives and support for their own teams. When recruiting HWBAs to this voluntary role, we asked for people who had a genuine interest in HWB to apply. There was an understanding that giving the role to a member of the team who was not engaged in the work would be counterproductive, and the aim of communicating with and supporting the people within their teams would be unsuccessful.

This has meant that the network has developed slowly, but with individuals who are entirely engaged with the HWB work within their area, and who support not only their own teams, but also each other.

The HWBAs:

- Meet bi-monthly to share successes, ask for help, and learn about upcoming Trust-wide HWB activity
- Are part of a lively WhatsApp group which is a place for immediate support and sharing of ideas
- Take part in various awareness raising events – some which are Trust-wide and some which are specific to their area
- Support the HWB Team in specific HWB activity, such as delivering roadshows into hard to reach areas
- Act as our 'eyes and ears' within their teams, imparting anecdotal evidence to inform the ongoing HWB programme.

The HWBA role is a voluntary one, and is best undertaken by someone with an energy and enthusiasm for the work. However, this isn't to underestimate the impact of an effective HWBA, and in September 2021, the annual Health and Wellbeing Star Award was won by the Pharmacy team who have an extremely engaged and active team of HWBAs working within it. They are supported in their HWB work by the leadership team within the department, who recognise the importance of demonstrably supporting the HWB of the people within their teams. They are given time to undertake their HWB activities, so that the wider team feels the benefit.

This commitment to supporting the HWB role is vital in ensuring that it can be effective, and so this strategy proposes that **all Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors will be given 1 hour of protected time each week to undertake their HWB role.**

Whilst it is acknowledged that operational challenges often result in changing priorities on a day to day

basis, nevertheless it is important that managers support this protected time, as an indication of support not only for the HWBA themselves, but for the benefit of the wellbeing of the wider team.

Communication

Communicating with a large, diverse, and often dispersed workforce can be challenging, and yet if we are to be a pro-active, responsive and relevant source of support, we must have vibrant 2-way communication with the entire workforce.

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
Appointed a dedicated internal communications officer, focussing on HWB communications in the main	Launch an external facing website, for existing staff and potential recruits <i>(Year 1)</i>
Launched an improved monthly HWB newsletter which is sent to every email inbox on a monthly basis	Review health and wellbeing communication before creating and launching a health and wellbeing communication strategy <i>(Years 1-2)</i>
Developed a monthly newsletter aimed at managers, and another aimed at HWBAs	
Designed and launched new Balance branding, along with branding guidelines, and resource packs for HWBAs and other members of staff to use in their own area	
Agreed an annual plan of awareness events, in line with the national HWB promotions calendar	

Risks and challenges

A strategy is only ever a moment in time, and as is true for other strategies, this plan will change and adapt as the landscape of health and wellbeing changes over the lifetime of this strategy document.

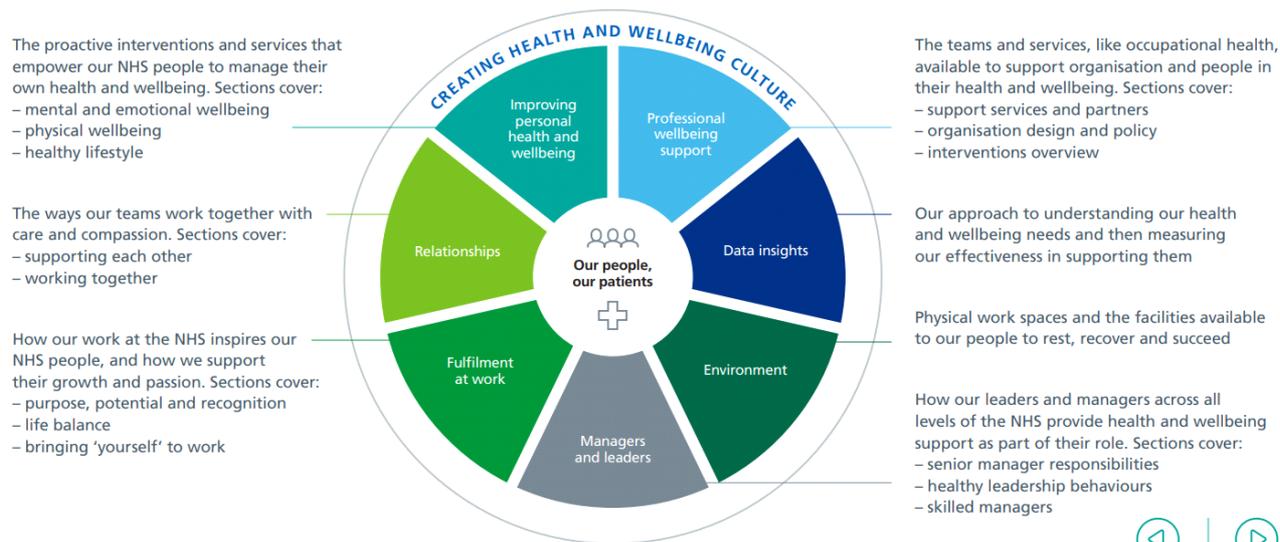
At this point however, there remain key risks in terms of the sustainability of this work moving forward over the coming years.

- Engagement and buy in from line managers. If managers don't see or feel the value of this work, they are unlikely to create the right conditions for their team members to thrive at work, or to access relevant support as it's needed.
- The ability for staff to access relevant HWB activities and support. This remains a challenge as the organisation continues to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic with an over-stretched

workforce. And yet if staff are unable to access activities, information events, 'fun at work events' and other such things, the impact of those events will be minimal, and we will continue to have a workforce which is exhausted, feels undervalued, may choose to look for alternative employment.

- The sustainability of both the level of activity, as well as the HWB team itself remains uncertain. The HWB Team and the internal comms officer, are all employed on a fixed term basis. Many of the HWB activities which have taken place over the last 12-18 months have been funded from Covid related monies. In order for the work to remain visible, and to be delivered at pace, agreement needs to be reached as to how this will happen on a longer term basis.
- Failure to ensure that our health and wellbeing offer is an inclusive one (or to adapt and extend efforts to make it so) could result in varying experiences in relation to feelings of health and wellbeing from those from minority groups.

Appendix 1 - NHS England Health and Wellbeing Framework



Appendix 2 - Commitments by health and wellbeing framework element:

Environment:

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
Installed a range of outside seating areas at both QEH and BGH sites, in areas which are shielded from visitors to both sites.	Open a Listening Space on site at QEH, offering a quiet reflective space for staff to use which is away from the work place. It will also offer a range of HWB activities for staff to access throughout the week, both during the day and early evening. (Year 1)
Improved the menu choices within the catering establishments at QEH, including healthier options such as vegetarian, vegan as well as specific dietary requirements e.g. halal, kosher.	Provide an innovative 24/7 catering offer on site at QEH, to enable staff who work out of hours to access hot food during all shifts. (Year 1)
Widened the range of menu options available at BGH to include more hot food options.	Improve the catering experience – both the environment and the menu choices – at BGH (Year 2)
	Improve the information we give to staff about healthy eating, allowing them to make healthy choices at work, but also to inform their choices at home. (Year 2)

Professional wellbeing support:

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
Undergone a full review of the Occupational Health Service, to expand to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service, ensuring a more holistic approach to support.	Introduce focussed psychology support, with the recruitment of a Clinical Psychologist for staff for staff referrals, as well as supporting other areas of support with appropriate supervision e.g. Mental Health First Aiders, and through proactive measures such as the completion of stress risk assessments. Additionally, review the support that Talkworks have provided since July 2020, which has been critical in supporting the psychological needs of some of our staff, but which is costly, and therefore unsustainable in the longer term. (Year 1 & 2)
Consolidated the testing and vaccination services into their permanent ‘homes’;	Reinvigorate the physiotherapy support for staff, with the recruitment of a Physiotherapist who will be

vaccinations within Occupational Health and Wellbeing; testing within Pathology.	focussed on staff referrals, and who will maintain strong links with the Trust Physiotherapy service. (Year 1)
Maintained the PCAS service in a form that keeps our staff safe, and offers the best advice and up to date guidance and PPE.	Ensure that on-site vaccinations for staff, including for Covid-19, remain available, or that suitable alternative options are provided as appropriate (for example, when demand for Covid-19 vaccination falls.) (Years 1-3)
Reviewed and improved the manager referral process into Occupational Health and Wellbeing, with full stakeholder involvement.	Agree the longer term sustainability of the Health and Wellbeing Team, which is currently employed on a fixed term basis. (Years 2-3)

Data insights:

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
Completed a local health needs assessment as part of our successful accreditation for the North East Better Health at Work Award.	Improve the participation rate of the quarterly Pulse Survey, acknowledging that 'survey fatigue' is a real thing, but understanding that this <u>real time feedback</u> is extremely valuable in determining local focus of effort. (Years 1-3)
Added a number of local HWB specific questions to the annual NHS Staff Survey.	Implement an effective feedback mechanism for emerging themes from the HWB Check-ins (Years 1-2)
Developed a HWB early Warning Dashboard, highlighting key areas of staff absence, including type specific absence, starters and leavers, and Occupational Health data.	Complete the NHS England HWB Framework self-assessment (Years 1-2)
Launched HWB Check-ins for all staff	Engage with staff networks and staff side directly to ensure that anecdotal evidence is heard and triangulated with more formal data. (Years 1-3)
Participated in the monthly (now quarterly) Pulse Survey	

Managers and leaders:

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
HWB Check-ins	Launch the 'Leading Well at Gateshead' Programme for all managers and leaders, with the golden thread of HWB and ED&I woven through each element. (Year 1)
Delivered compassionate HWB conversation training to managers.	Encourage managers to role model behaviours such as planning and taking annual leave, not working excessive hours regularly and thus making it 'the norm', and taking regular breaks – acknowledging the importance of doing so. (Years 1-3)
Launched the new 'Managing Well at Gateshead' programme for managers, with the golden thread of HWB and ED&I woven through each element.	As part of the wider recruitment and retention work, aim to build capacity into rotas to enable staff to attend activities outside of the normal job role, such as training and HWB activities. (Years 1-2)
Started our Compassionate Leadership work, led by the OD Team, and encompassing work around a Just Culture.	Aim to enable all Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors to have one hour each week of protected time, in order for them to carry out HWB activity. (Years 1-2)
Engaged our Chief Nurse as a Health and Wellbeing Ambassador for the Executive Team, as well providing leadership and 'permission' for this work amongst other teams.	Working with POD Leads, ask all business units to include HWB as a regular agenda item at Business Unit, Departmental and Team meetings. (Years 1-2)
	Ensure that as part of the Leading Well at Gateshead programme that managers understand that they have 'permission to act' in terms of supporting people in their teams. (Years 1-2)

Relationships:

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
Implemented our Trust ICORE values; Innovation, Care, Openness, Respect, Engagement; along with the associated desired behaviours	Review the Bullying and Harassment (B&H) support that we offer, including the B&H advisors. Ensure that if the service is useful and effective, that the advisors reflect the diversity of our workforce. (Year 2)

Continued to provide a bespoke internal mediation service, to provide support when relationships break down	Launch the 'Leading Well at Gateshead' programme, with sessions focussed on areas such as behaviours, engagement, team development, and communication (Year 1)
Launched the 'Managing Well at Gateshead' programme, with sessions focussed on areas such as behaviours, engagement, team development, and communication	Review the internal mediation service to understand the impact of that work, and whether it will be beneficial to train more staff to carry out this role. (Year 1-2)
Trained a number of cultural ambassadors who are available to support colleagues from our diverse workforce in areas such as disciplinary hearings.	Develop a 'Just Culture' at Gateshead, to ensure that a culture of fairness, openness and learning is felt by all staff. (Years 1-3)
Continued to support the work of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, and promoted the service widely.	Develop a network of Freedom to Speak Up Champions who will be a touchpoint for staff to get signposting and support. (Year 2)

6. Improving personal health and wellbeing

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
Focussed attention on Menopause support, including regular menopause peer support drop in sessions (the Menopause Café); offered training to staff and managers; developed guidance for staff and managers.	A number of staff will be trained as Menopause Champions, to be a point of contact for staff who may need to be signposted to further support. Develop a Menopause Policy, to ensure fair and consistent support across the Trust. (Year 1)
Worked with Citizen's Advice Gateshead to develop a direct access route into support, advice and guidance. This service enables staff to 'queue jump' and speak to an advisor within 24 hours of an enquiry.	Provide timely and responsive support to themes that emerge as the wider data collection work – from health needs assessments; from HWB Check-in themes; from Pulse survey results; from annual staff survey results. (Years 1-3)
Offered convenient, on-site access to vaccinations, not just for Covid-19, but flu and other relevant vaccines.	Develop a Working Carers Support Group, using the same model as the Menopause support group, to enable working carers to come together and offer peer support, as well as access professional support. (Year 1)
Partnered with Salary Finance to offer financial education, simple savings, and affordable loans, including short term	The HWB Programme Board will explore whether it would be beneficial for all staff to have a personal

loans – helping staff to avoid high interest ‘pay day loans’.	HWB objective within their appraisal - linked to the HWB check-in. (Years 1-2)
Developed a comprehensive range of routes into self-help which is promoted on the HWB pages of StaffZone, as well as being produced as a resource for managers as part of the HWB Check-in Materials.	

7. Fulfilment at work

What have we already done?	What else will we do?
Three staff networks are now well established within the Trust, with a fourth in its infancy. Representatives from the networks support not only network specific work, but also have influence and stakeholder involvement with Trust-wide pieces of work.	Review our flexible working practices, and enable our people to think differently about how they work. (Years 2-3)
Delivered a number of ‘Thank you’ events and gestures such as the free ice cream van, festive hampers, free drinks and snacks, and a £250 HWB bonus payment for every member of staff.	Design jobs which reflect the way in which a modern organisation works, embracing digital technology to enable more agile ways of working. (Years 2-3)
Recognise outstanding achievements in an annual award ceremony – The Star Awards – as well as smaller acts of behaviour or achievements which demonstrate people living our ICORE values day to day, with the monthly You’re a Star process.	Continue to offer a range of activities to support staff morale including physical activities, support groups, and a range of other activities depending on staff interests. For example: Weekly choir; annual walking challenge; annual 5-a-side football tournament. (Years 1-3)
Launched Schwartz Rounds and Team Time, as a way for individuals and teams to examine the emotional impact of working in healthcare.	



Gateshead Health
NHS Foundation Trust