



Organisational Guidance

Responding to the death of a colleague,
terminal illness or a traumatic incident

Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust





Self-Care after Trauma:

As an organisation, we understand that managers placed in the position of responding to a traumatic incident are likely also experiencing distress. We understand that this may be difficult for you, and while we have every faith that you'll look to support your team and those impacted as a leader, we also ask that you consider how you take care of yourself during such a period.

To this end, we heavily encourage you to also consider how you may lean on support detailed in Appendix 3 or visit balancegateshead.com for information on further Occupational Health and Wellbeing support services.

Responding to the death of a colleague or a traumatic incident:

This guidance provides managers with information around their responsibilities, the Trust's processes and the support available to both them and their teams in the event of a traumatic incident. This is inclusive of a death in service.

The guidance within this document may also be applied in cases such as the passing of former employees or recently-departed colleagues. Support referenced in this guidance may also be relevant and applicable for those who are retiring due to ill health and/or traumatic events within the organisation.

When a death or traumatic incident occurs at work it can impact those who worked closely with the person who has passed, as well as the wider workforce.

As an employer, Gateshead Health is responsible for informing others within the workforce about a colleague's passing in a sensitive and personal way. The organisation must also support those impacted by the death, as well as contact the person's family or next of kin to offer condolences. The organisation must also inform colleagues how they can offer condolences, and share details of any funeral or ceremony if and when staff have been invited.

Importantly, all of this must be handled sensitively, professionally and consistently – all while meeting the wishes of the family and/or next of kin of the deceased. This document therefore sets out expectations around the actions, processes, communication and support that is likely to be seen as standard in response to a passing or incident.

In the first instance:

It is organisational protocol to ensure that the People & OD Advisory Team are informed of a colleague's death as soon as possible. Ensuring awareness within People & OD Advisory Team ensures awareness in the other suitable areas required in both a timely and appropriate manner.

The People & OD Advisory Team has a number of processes in place which can help to deal with these matters. Amongst these, it is agreed that an assigned People & OD Advisory Team contact can work to gather an understanding of the next of kin's wishes going forward in relation to the organisation's response. This is key to crafting any approach the organisation will take in response to a passing, and particularly in relation to matters associated with communication.

To this end, the People & OD Advisory Team will also ensure that the Communications Team will become part of a response team. Communications will then advise as to any suitable organisational response, including any proactive or reactive communications and work to deliver news, offer condolences or detail confidentiality. This will be driven by the wishes of the next of kin. Further information on communication protocols can be found below.



At the same time, the People & OD Advisory Team will work to inform the CEO office and Board to ensure awareness amongst the highest levels of the organisation. Finally, it is important that Occupational Health and Wellbeing has an awareness of the incident in question to enable effective preparation/planning as well as suitable promotion of relevant and targeted support.

Practicalities:

In cases of traumatic incidents and/or the passing of colleagues, the organisation's ability to continue functioning via the delivery of expected services and operations may be impacted.

In the instance of a traumatic incident or passing, line managers are asked to prioritise the health and wellbeing of their staff and ensure that colleagues have sufficient space and freedom to process the news wherever possible.

During these times, managers will need to prioritise staff wellbeing. Please consider the use of bank and agency staff as this can provide additional resilience to services and help maintain the quality of patient care while providing more flexibility to regular staff who have been impacted.

Communicating a colleague's death:

A pre-defined approach is not always possible (or advisable) in relation to communicating a colleague's death. This is largely due to the sensitivity of the subject, as well as the differing wishes of families or next of kin.

It is very important that both our People & OD Advisory Team and Communications Team are involved in the response to a colleague's death. These teams will help to gauge, understand and fulfil the next of kin's wishes; as well as ensure that any news and updates are communicated in an appropriate, supportive and respectful manner.

As part of initial contact with the family, onward communications should be agreed including:

- Whether details of the cause of death will be shared or not
- Chosen channels for communicating the news with colleagues and third parties
- Signposting of funeral arrangements if appropriate
- Agreement of any other remembrance activity which may have been proposed at this early stage, including a condolence book which should be offered as an option to all
- Whether the family agree to permit the organisation to note the death in service at a future board meeting
- Arranging a formal call around further administrative steps which will follow

It may not be possible to agree everything above in one call, in which case you may be required to make further calls.

Please note that it is likely to be beneficial to inform and include the Occupational Health and Wellbeing team as to the nature of the incident in order to allow for the preparation of support for staff impacted.

Informing those most heavily impacted:

In cases of a colleague's death, news may travel fast – particularly amongst closest to the deceased. We ask that you ensure all colleagues are aware of the sensitivity of the subject and importance of respecting the next of kin's boundaries and wishes. Colleagues should be asked not to post anything on social media until adequate time has passed for family and close friends to have been notified.



Where colleagues in your team are not yet aware of a passing, you as the line manager should take the decision as to whether you feel comfortable delivering this news to the team. If you do not feel comfortable with delivering this news, please request the support of the assigned People & OD Advisory Team contact or their senior manager.

Consideration should also be given to informing colleagues who are not at work on the day the news of a colleague's passing breaks. It is at the line manager's discretion as to whether to inform a colleague (or colleagues) of a passing while they are out of work, and it may be advisable to check in with other colleagues aware of the situation to gauge opinion on whether it would be suitable to break such distressing news in such a manner.

In consideration of the wellbeing of those who may be informed while out of work, it may not always be advisable to choose to inform the colleague – but it should also be noted that it is often of more comfort to hear such news from a reliable and trusted source first.

Where there is a need to contact external support partners:

The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Team may work with external partners to deliver specialised support where appropriate. This might include additional counselling capacity, trauma support or clinical psychology.

Informing the wider workforce:

The Communications Team will require confirmation that immediately impacted teams have been informed before any wider communication takes place.

It will be the responsibility of the Communications Team, who will work in tandem with the People & OD Advisory Team, to inform the wider workforce if and where suitable. Ultimately, this decision should be driven by the next of kin. A note to the wider workforce must be arranged via an appropriate channel (e.g an all-user email) and must be addressed from an appropriate senior manager or executive lead. In the case of a death in service, this may also be noted in a board meeting – pending the next of kin's permission. All communications distributed should include details of support available to staff – viewable in **appendix 3**.

Where it is requested that the news is not shared throughout the organisation, the organisation should instead look to focus on a targeted approach to support amongst those most likely to be impacted.

In the instance that a next of kin expresses a desire for news of the death to be minimised, the organisation should work to promote relevant support services more discreetly and on a wider basis, without direct mention of the passing. This may include the promotion of mental health first aiders, mental health diffusers, counselling referrals, talking therapies, staff wellbeing hub referrals, other mental wellbeing support and the support after trauma document which can be found in **appendix 3**.

Employee support:

The Communications Team will play a key role in sharing information around any support made available to staff in the wake of the passing. The team may also promote a virtual or physical book of condolence/remembrance, or organise a moment of silence - and will review organisational materials and communications in the aim of ensuring no additional distress is caused for those impacted.

The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Team may work alongside the Communications Team in the event of a colleague's death to ensure not only that support is offered in a suitable fashion (for example, discreetly where a next of kin does not want a wide awareness of a death) and does not cause further distress to those impacted.



For further information on targeted support for those most heavily impacted, please see the **supporting your team** section under the **process of events following a death** section.

Process of events following a death:

When a colleague passes away in-service, the organisation must work with the family or next of kin of the deceased in order to help to finalise matters in a sensitive and supportive way. This generally includes queries and activities related to the employment contract, pay, pension, benefits and the return of any personal or organisational belongings.

Process:

A flow chart can be seen in **appendix 1**, and outlines the specific sequence of events that should take place following the death of a colleague.

This sequence of events outlines the general involvement of People & OD Advisory Team in response to a death in service, as well as other key stakeholders as listed above such as Communications.

In this process, you will be able to easily identify actions which are led by yourself as the line manager of the deceased. The People & OD Advisory Team are there to support you in enacting any such steps, and should you feel any uncertainty or unease with specific steps, you are encouraged to make contact with the assigned People & OD Advisory Team Advisor.

Appendix 4 outlines steps which may be taken in immediate response to any instance of colleague suicide. This is primarily for the use and reference of any postvention team which may be formed in response to any such case.

Making contact with the next of kin:

Within the process above (viewable in **appendix 1**), is a step which asks the line manager to give consideration to communicating with the next of kin.

A standardised condolence letter template, viewable in **appendix 2**, has been created to provide you with a straightforward means of making contact with the family or next of kin of the deceased. This should be sent within three days of a death.

This letter expresses the organisation's (and your) sincere condolences for any loss, while prompting its recipient to get in touch when ready in order to arrange a meeting to be attended by yourself, a People & OD Advisory Team colleague, Pensions Officer and any further relevant parties.

In order to encourage a sensitive and personal approach, the template also includes dedicated space to share any professional comments, which may include memories and thoughts of the deceased's work within.

The ultimate aim of this letter is to help to open up a line of communication with the next of kin which can help us as an organisation better understand their concerns and wishes, while providing us as an organisation with an opportunity to provide clarity around finalising the employee's affairs.

Supporting your team:

Following the death of colleague, you will also be asked by People & OD Advisory Team to consider the specific support needs of the deceased's colleagues. As a line manager, you will be asked to identify



any specific individual or groups of staff which may benefit from more targeted support following a passing.

Immediate support will be arranged by the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Team, who may also employ the assistance of external partners and/or other teams from within the organisation.

Support which may be available to those who most heavily impacted by a passing might include the provision of a dedicated safe space on-site with listening support if and when available; the provision of a basic catering/refreshment offer; support from mental health diffusers and/or mental health first aiders; access to post-traumatic incident support specialists and/or urgent referrals to counselling and talking therapy services.

More widely, work will also commence to ensure that all colleagues are aware of the support available to them following such a traumatic incident (where appropriate, dependent upon the next of kin's wishes).

Where required, the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Team will work with and alongside the Communications Team to arrange and plan the promotion of support. It is important that any broad promotion of support is organised in this manner to ensure sensitivity in relation to confidentiality, family wishes, process and other such influences. More on this approach can be seen in the **informing the workforce** section.

Following the death of a colleague, Occupational Health and Wellbeing may provide you as a line manager with a customised version of the 'Support after Trauma' document (**appendix 3**). This document would include a tailored and bespoke plan of support for your team.

As a line manager, you may be asked to share your thoughts on what an effective bespoke support package may look like prior to this being shared with your team. Once shared, we will ask you to ensure all colleagues can access a copy of the document (virtually and physically where possible), are aware of the bespoke and general support available and offered to them and feel safe and able to access any support.

Payroll and Pension:

As a line manager, your involvement in resolving payroll issues following the death of a colleague should be fairly minimal.

Following the death of a colleague in service, it will be the responsibility of People & OD Advisory Team to ensure that Payroll Services have been notified of the date of death; to halt pay after the death date and to establish if the employee was a member of the NHS Pension Scheme. Furthermore, the assigned People & OD Advisory Team Advisor will keep contact with the next of kin to update on relevant progress.

The Pensions Officer (where relevant) will provide details of any relevant death benefits to the next of kin, arrange for the appropriate paperwork to be completed and relevant changes to be made in ESR.

The People & OD Advisory Team will work with Payroll Services and the next of kin to release any final pay and pension entitlement. Where necessary, the People & OD Advisory Team will link with Workforce to set the next of kin up via ESR for an initial pension payment.

ESR:

The People & OD Advisory Team will be on hand to support you in terminating a deceased employee's record on ESR Manager Self Service for payroll purposes.



While the assigned People & OD Advisory Team Advisor can assist, the line manager will be expected to identify the employee's final working day, date of death and annual leave accrued/taken in order to determine any outstanding annual leave entitlement. Please note that no deductions of over taken annual leave should be made.

Other matters:

Communicating with other stakeholders:

In addition to the communications outlined above, a separate email should also be sent to any stakeholders or groups that the deceased colleague was significantly involved with.

Media:

The Communications Team will be responsible for preparing a media statement or response if this is warranted or required.

Personal belongings:

Family members should be asked what they would like to do with any personal belongings which the deceased may have left at work. This is not something that needs to be discussed immediately, so please be considerate in choosing when to ask this question.

Image usage:

To remain sensitive to the news and avoid causing additional distress to those impacted, please give due consideration to any usage of photographs of the deceased.

Remembrance activity:

When discussing ideas for remembrance (and following discussion with the family), some ideas which may be suitable include:

- A condolence book (this may be virtual)
- Attendance at funerals
- A service of remembrance within the Trust
- A moments silence

Vehicle leasing and salary sacrifices:

It will be the responsibility of People & OD Advisory Team to establish whether the deceased employee has a lease car or is subscribed to a salary sacrifice scheme, and to take action as appropriate.

Trade Union membership:

It is also the responsibility of People & OD Advisory Team to establish whether the employee is a member of a Trade Union, and inform any Union of the death in service. Please note that this step may need to be completed prior to a letter of condolence being sent.

Immigration status:

The People & OD Advisory Team will identify whether the employee was a migrant worker and inform UKBA where required.



Key contacts:

In reference to the information within this document, the following are useful contact details. Please try these contact details in the first instance rather than generic contact details for a team to ensure sensitivity can be respected.

People & OD Advisory Team:

Please contact the Executive Director of People and OD and Head of People Services in the first instance.

Communications:

Helen Fox
Head of Communication
helen.fox.19@nhs.net
0191 445 6120

Occupational Health and Wellbeing:

Claire Hobson
Occupational Health and Wellbeing Manager
claire.hobson4@nhs.net
0191 445 5494



Appendix 1 – Death in Service Flow Chart:

People & OD Advisory Team notified of
Death in Service

People & OD Advisory Team will inform the relevant Senior Managers and liaise with the employees direct Line Manager to ensure they have been informed and that information is obtained on the employees next to kin and dependants.

The People & OD Advisory Team's support should ensure that the Line Manager has given consideration to:

- Communicating with the employees' next of kin i.e. agree the method and timing of any communication.
(People & OD Advisory Team contact to ensure condolence letter is sent within 3 days by appropriate manager)
- The requirements for support to the deceased employee's colleagues and offer access to Occupational Health Services.
- Central COMMS being sent out if appropriate
- Death of a colleague communications protocol (Covid19) [Death of colleague communication protocol \(Covid19\)](#)

The People & OD Advisory Team will contact Payroll Services to: notify the date of death, stop pay after the date of death, and establish if the employee was a member of the NHS Pension Scheme. People & OD Advisory Team contact responsible for ensuring a timely process of pension paperwork by regularly linking with payroll. People & OD Advisory Team contact will keep next to kin up to date on progress at all times. The Pensions Officer will provide details of the relevant death benefits to the family and arrange for the appropriate paperwork to be completed and relevant changes to be made in ESR. Information on death benefits can be found at: <http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Pensions/DeathBenefits.aspx>

People & OD Advisory Team to support Line manager in terminating the employee's record on ESR Manager Self Service for payroll purposes. Line Manager will identify employees: last working day, date of death, annual leave accrued/taken to determine any outstanding annual leave entitlement (no deductions of over taken annual leave should be made).

People & OD Advisory Team will work with Payroll Services to resolve the release of any final pay and pension entitlement in conjunction with the Next of Kin. People & OD Advisory Team contact to link with Workforce team to ensure next of Kin has been set up on ESR if appropriate for initial pension payment.



People & OD Advisory Team will identify: if the employee has a lease car or is subscribed to a salary sacrifice scheme and will link with NTW expenses team so that appropriate action can be taken.



People & OD Advisory Team will identify if the employee is a Trade Union member and will inform the relevant Trade Union of the death in service.
People & OD Advisory Team will identify if the employee was a migrant worker, if so UKBA will be informed.



Appendix 2 – Condolence Letter template:

Note: Please use [the branded letterhead template available via StaffZone](#). Please forward this to the CEO's Office prior to sending for signature.

Date

Private & Confidential

Name

Address

Dear

I am writing, both personally and on behalf of the Trust, to express my sincere condolences to you on your sad loss.

Name of deceased employee was a valued member of the *department* at the Trust. He/She was a hard-working and well respected employee who will be greatly missed by us all.

Add in any other professional comments you feel appropriate. If appropriate include an example of a particular memory of the deceased relating to their work e.g. a project which they worked on successfully, a team they were part of.

I am sorry to intrude at this sad time but there are a number of administrative matters that require attention. [When you feel ready, I would be grateful if you could contact myself to arrange a suitable date for myself, a People & OD Advisory Team colleague and our Pensions Officer, *insert name* to meet with you in order to discuss the NHS Pensions Benefits to which you are entitled, and to complete the necessary paperwork. For any Pension related enquiries you can contact *insert name* direct if you wish on *insert telephone number*.] **(ONLY LEAVE THIS SECTION IN IF EMPLOYEE IS A MEMBER OF THE NHS PENSION SCHEME)**

For information, any outstanding payments such as annual leave entitlement that is due will also be paid and this can be discussed when we meet. If you require these funds before this meeting please contact *name of People & OD Advisory Team contact* at *email address* or phone *telephone number* and we can arrange this.

I understand *name of deceased employee* was a member of *name of Trade Union*. If you wish to contact them their number is *telephone number*.

If there is any way in which the Trust can help you at this most difficult time, please do not hesitate to contact me. If I am unable to answer your questions myself, please be assured that I will contact the appropriate person on your behalf or provide you with their details so you can contact them, whichever you would prefer.

Our thoughts are with you at this very sad time, and again, our deepest sympathy.

Yours sincerely

**Trudie Davies,
Chief Executive**

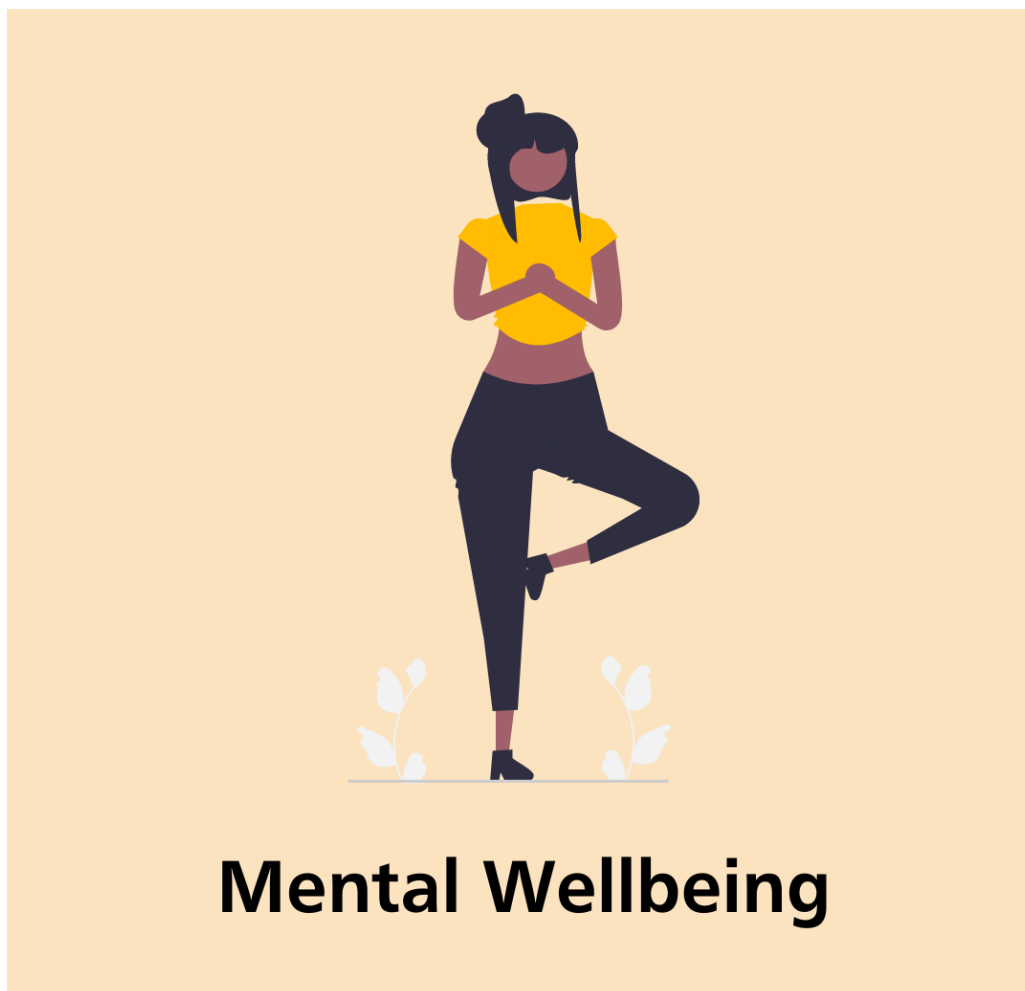


CC: People and OD Advisory Team Advisor's Name

Appendix 3 – Guide to wellbeing support after trauma:

NOTE: This guidance document can be found and signposted to online at:

<https://www.balancegateshead.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Wellbeing-Support-Support-after-Trauma.docx>



In the aftermath of trauma, it is of vital importance that we find appropriate ways to support ourselves as we respond to feelings of unanticipated distress, stress, fright, grief and sadness.

The support that we need is unique to each of us, and can operate on a spectrum of one extreme to another. For some, space will be a necessity, for others the company of others will be a vital coping mechanism. Some may benefit from professional support, while some will find benefit in comforting others.

There is no one-size fits all solution to support and our support needs in response to trauma are varied. This document aims to outline the support available to all colleagues, in an attempt to ensure that we meet as many needs as is reasonably possible.

Further to the below document, a range of support is also available through [balancegateshead.com](https://www.balancegateshead.com), including more [personal support](#) options which cover underlying influences of mental wellbeing.



Those with suggested support additions to this document are asked to get in touch with the health and wellbeing team directly, who can arrange to update the document.

Get in touch on:
ghnt.hwb@nhs.net

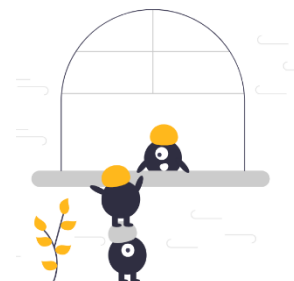
Immediate response



Mental Health Diffusers:

A number of colleagues throughout the organisation have been trained as 'diffusers', there to provide immediate debrief to members of staff impacted by trauma or a traumatic incident.

The support offered by diffusers aims to ensure that colleagues feel support in the period immediately following an incident. Diffusers can help to identify further sources of support, and can signpost to further specialist support services where appropriate.



A number of our diffusers work nightshifts, and to this end the organisation aims to ensure that a diffuser is always available no matter the time that trauma occurs.

We advise you make contact with diffusers as soon as possible following an incident to provide immediate support. A full list of diffusers can be found via the QR code to the right or on balancegateshead.com.



Occupational Health:

Where working hours allow, it is advised that you also immediately contact the Occupational Health team. The Occupational Health service is available between 08:30am – 5:00pm between Monday – Thursday, and 08:30am – 4:30pm on a Friday.

Contacting Occupational Health enables the team to prepare and provide direct support to those impacted by trauma. The team can work to identify and create a safe space for impacted colleagues, and will wherever possible also provide the emergency provision of listening support.

To make contact with Occupational Health on **0191 445 (5494)**.



Crisis support:



A number of organisations exist to support you in crisis following trauma. If you feel your life is at risk, please immediately call 999, visit A&E or contact your local crisis support team on **0800 652 2864**. Those who need to a listening ear can also contact various 24/7 services, including:

- The [Samaritans](#) helpline on **116 123**
- [SHOUT](#)'s conversation text service on **85258**
- The [National Suicide Prevention Service](#) on **0800 689 5652**

1:1 Support



Counselling through Occupational Health:

All colleagues can refer themselves to our counselling service. Where preferred, colleagues can also ask their manager to make a referral on their behalf.

Talking therapies are for anyone who is going through a tough time or who has emotional problems that they need help with. Sessions provide you with the opportunity to talk about what is bothering you, look at your problems in a different way and an expert who will respect you.

Counselling can be helpful in many scenarios, but particularly for those who experience depression, anxiety, eating disorders, phobias and addiction. These services may also be useful after traumatic events such as bereavement or personal issues.

To make a referral, please complete the [referral form](#) (also available through the QR code to the right) and send it to ghnt.occupational.health@nhs.net. In the case of referrals in direct response to traumatic/serious incidents, please indicate the referral is urgent and as a result of the incident in question.



NENC ICS Staff Wellbeing Hub – Counselling Support:

Colleagues who would prefer to access confidential support may wish to instead access the support offered by the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System's (NENC ICS) [Staff Wellbeing Hub](#).

As well as a confidential helpline, accessible on **0191 223 2030**, colleagues can complete their dedicated [online referral form](#) to request support. This can also be accessed via the QR code to the right, below.





Referrals can also be made on behalf of a colleague where agreed. Please note that referrals to the NENC ICS Staff Wellbeing Hub are only picked up Monday to Friday (excluding any bank holidays), between 9:00am – 5:00pm. The Wellbeing Hub team can also be reached via Hubstheword@cntw.nhs.uk.



Mental Health First Aiders:

Gateshead Health is home to a dedicated team of trained mental health first aiders (MHFAs), there to support staff with their own mental health as well as the mental health of their colleagues.

All MHFAs are trained and accredited by Mental Health First Aid England, and can help colleagues to recognise warning signs of mental ill health and access further support.



You can visit the Balance website for a [full list of mental health first aiders](#) at Gateshead, which can also be accessed through the QR code, right. Please feel free to contact someone who is close to your area or someone completely independent to your role/team.



Local Talking Therapies:

Colleagues who are registered with a GP in the local area can also access NHS talking therapy services. Depending on the location of the GP you're registered with, you can access and self-refer to:

- [Gateshead Talking Therapies](#)
- Vita Health Group's [Newcastle Talking Therapies](#)
- [Sunderland IAPT](#)
- [South Tyneside Lifecycle Primary Care and Mental Health Service](#)
- [Talking Changes](#), for County Durham and Darlington

Environment





The Listening Space:

The Listening Space is a dedicated health and wellbeing facility on site at the QE Hospital, which is designed to provide colleagues with a space to reflect, decompress and access a listening ear. The room also hosts health and wellbeing-focused events, workshops and meetings, a [schedule](#) for which can be found on the health and wellbeing website.

The space is bookable for health and wellbeing purposes, and can be secured by emailing ghnt.hwb@nhs.net with your request.

You might use the space as a safe space for your team to benefit from a wellbeing-focused chat, or might use the space to book a chat with a mental health first aider.



Chaplaincy:

Our Chaplaincy Centre is located opposite the entrance of The Hub at the QE Hospital. The chapel itself is open 24 hours per day, as is our multi-faith prayer room. All are welcome to use these facilities to find peace and quiet.



Our Chaplaincy Team are there to support all – including all staff, of any faith or none. Their work is to comfort you through times of difficulty and distress. The team are available 24 hours per day, and can be accessed by:

- Contacting switchboard to bleep the Duty Chaplain on call or the duty Roman Catholic Chaplain (please state clearly which is required)
- Calling 0191 445 (2072) and leaving a message. Please note that in emergency or urgent context, it is advised to use the switchboard.

Bereavement Support



Love and Loss Support Group:

The Love and Loss Support Group is a weekly dial-in session takes place every Tuesday between 7:30pm – 9:00pm and is facilitated by bereavement expert Piers Lance. Piers has over 35 years of experience in the area, and his sessions are designed to provide a safe space to explore your feelings and discuss any loss.

Discussing loss and hearing of the experiences and thoughts of others can be very helpful in better understanding and coming to terms with our feelings. All





sessions are free-to-access, targeted to health and care colleagues from across Tyne & Wear, County Durham, Northumberland, Teesside and Cumbria, and are provided as part of the NENC ICS Staff Wellbeing Hub offer.

To access this support, please visit the [Eventbrite booking page](#).

Cruse Bereavement:

Cruse offers specialist and personalised bereavement support to help you through the emotional pain of loss. Targeted support can be provided through the completion of a [questionnaire](#) which aims to provide you with the most relevant support.

Those looking to access Cruse immediately can also access direct support through their helpline on **0808 808 1677** ([opening hours apply](#)) or online [CruseChat service](#).

Cruse Bereavement Support



Facing the Future:

Another offer promoted by Cruse Bereavement Support in association with Samaritans, Facing the Future aims to provide support for those bereaved by suicide specifically.

Group sessions are currently held by Zoom, last 90 minutes per session and are designed to be consumed as part of a six-week programme. Participants must attend at least five of six sessions, and must attend the first session.

To register for the sessions, visit the Face the Future registration page, also accessible via the QR code to the right.

Facing the **future**
support for people bereaved by suicide



If U Care Share – Support After Suicide:

If u care share's [Support After Suicide service](#) is available to those who from Gateshead, Newcastle, Durham, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Northumberland. The service aims to provide emotional support to those impacted by suspected suicide.

If you have lost someone to suicide, you are not alone. This services provides listening and support, and is available Monday to Friday between 09:00am – 5:00pm on **0191 387 5661**.



Mind's Bereavement Support:

Mind is home to a range of support, information, suggestions and advice to those who have experienced bereavement. Amongst the resources promoted by Mind include:

- [Support on self-care for grief after bereavement](#)
- [Support around bereavement by suicide](#)
- [Supporting those who've experienced bereavement](#)



Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM):



CALM's fantastic service directory provides signposting to support services and organisations across a number of specific issues.

Included amongst their promotion for bereavement support includes signposting to services who can assist more individual cases such as those facing child bereavement, those left behind by suicide and more.



You can visit the full directory, which also includes a range of signposting for other topics including mental health, depression and much more [here](#).

Further Support



balancegateshead.com:

Our dedicated health and wellbeing website is designed to provide you with an awareness of and access to our health and wellbeing offer, including signposting to and information about our partners.

Via the website, you can find further support, resources and information around self-care as well as mental, physical, financial, social and environmental wellbeing.

To access the website, visit balancegateshead.com. To access the most relevant support quickly, we advise you use the search button in the top right corner of the website.



The health and wellbeing team:

In addition to the resources held via our website, we also have a dedicated health and wellbeing team who have a great awareness of both our own overarching health and wellbeing offer as well as the wider environment.

The team are happy to try help wherever possible and can be reached via ghnt.hwb@nhs.net.

NENC ICS Staff Wellbeing Hub:

In addition to the counselling provision offered by the NENC ICS Staff Wellbeing Hub, the team also provides all Gateshead colleagues with access to a diverse range of health and wellbeing support resources and offers, accessible through their [wellbeing hub website](#).



Amongst the resources promoted by the wellbeing hub includes:

- [Wellbeing offers](#) which include self-compassion courses, CBT programmes, support groups, physical activity events, mindfulness activities and more.
- Their [wellbeing diary](#), a self-help tool which helps you to monitor your wellbeing and identify trigger points, coping mechanisms and drivers of good wellbeing.
- A [wellbeing toolkit](#), which aims to help you build the coping mechanisms needed to manage your wellbeing.





Appendix 4 – Response and Review Checklist:

Research-based guidance published by the University of Surrey has been used to inform this documentation and also provides a response and review checklist. This checklist has been adapted below in order to provide a clear process and order of support to those impacted by the suicide of a colleague.

Immediate Response:

News of a death by suicide:

- Notification of a death has been received by the dedicated postvention team
- The postvention team has liaised to agree a 'lead'
- The postvention team lead has made contact with the manager of the deceased
- News of the colleague's death by suicide has been shared with team members and any close colleagues; in accordance with the guidance under the heading 'Communicating a colleague's death' within the Death in Service Guidance document
- Staff who are absent, on leave or who have recently departed have been identified and informed of the news
- Contact has been made with family of the deceased

Provision of support following a suicide:

- The postvention team has agreed and been informed of a final timetable for support
- Impacted colleagues, identified during the previous phase, have been encouraged to engage with the support. This may include dedicated time to access the support available
- A group support meeting for impacted colleagues has been facilitated and offered
- Individual meetings for impacted colleagues have been facilitated and are available
- Staff who may be susceptible to trauma (such as those who may have been present at the site of the suicide) have been identified and referred to therapeutic support if required
- The postvention team is visible and accessible
- Appropriate risk assessments such as TRiM have been used to ensure both staff and patient safety



Support for managers, team leaders and the Postvention team:

- Individual meetings for team leaders/managers have been facilitated and are available
- The team's manager has been educated around the potential impact and staff needs
- The team manager's has been supported to ensure that staff can be released from duties to attend support
- The team's manager has been supported to ensure that staff can be released from duties to attend their colleague's funeral (where attendance is welcomed by the family of the deceased)
- The team's manager has been supported in liaising with the deceased's next of kin in order to return any personal belongings
- The Postvention team has worked with the communications team to ensure any media enquiries are responded to appropriately
- The Postvention team has regularly checked in with each other to ensure each other's wellbeing and that undue strain isn't being placed on any one team member

Ongoing Response:

Provision of Support:

- A timetable of 'check-ins' has been agreed within the Postvention team and is agreeable with the team and manager
- Check-ins with the team and manager have taken place over the weeks and months following the passing of their colleague
- Any colleague who has been required to provide evidence to the coroner's court have been able to access support

Memorialisation and Remembrance:

- Key dates – inclusive of the date of the colleague's passing and their birthday have been identified and accounted for
- A member of the Postvention Team has agreed to take responsibility for checking-in with both the team and line manager slightly ahead of, and on, these dates.
- Any efforts to memorialise the deceased have been supported through the offer of facilitating conversation between colleagues.



Learning and Evaluation:

- Staff experiences have been collated utilising questions within the survey at: <https://forms.office.com/e/BQEn0wP8MQ>. Please note that while the survey can be distributed, you may wish to take a more personal approach by asking these questions in-person and recording answers accordingly.
- Evaluation of responses from colleagues has been distilled into key themes with key findings shared amongst the Postvention group
- Where applicable, findings have been used to alter the process and approach. This might include updating key documentation such as the Death in Service Guidance or Wellbeing Support after Trauma document as well as key communication platforms such as the intranet, health and wellbeing website or otherwise.
- Evaluation outcomes have been shared with the staff who received postvention support