



## North West Weekly Wellbeing



In these unprecedented and extraordinary times, I feel a strong commitment to ensuring that we are doing everything we can to help colleagues feel supported. As a probation officer myself, I understand how challenging frontline work and other roles within the business can be and there is no doubt that the demands of the job can take its toll on our wellbeing. I am a passionate advocate for prioritising emotional & physical health and love to share different techniques, tools and tips that I discover and use. This passion is grounded in many years of struggling with anxiety myself and exploring different ways to manage my own fluctuating emotional health. It is such a joy to have the opportunity to help improve the support provision for colleagues who inspire me daily and share some of the things we are doing in the North West.

### What have we been doing for staff wellbeing?

We wanted to think of ways to offer support that is conducive to our new temporary normal and flexible enough to meet colleagues' needs. In October last year we launched the North West Staff Support Team, a confidential listening and signposting service run by colleagues, for colleagues. We trained 35 Staff Support Team Members initially who offer one to one support across the region and have completed 162 support sessions to date. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and the team remains available to all staff via telephone or Skype. It has been amazing to see the service being used from the very first day it launched and inspirational to watch the team offering empathic, non-judgemental support to colleagues when they need it most. Having this structure in place has definitely made it easier to rally together and offer support at a time like this.



We send out a **'Weekly Wellbeing Wednesday'** blog that shares tips, resources and techniques to keep well during this time of uncertainty. It is a priority of mine that colleagues understand what support is available, how to access it and importantly that we continue to promote community in this extraordinary time. I will share a flavour of the content we send out but some of the themes include; **nutrition, breathwork, managing stress & anxiety, physical health, finding joy, connecting with others, mindfulness, loneliness & isolation.**



We also have a timetable of virtual activities that staff can get involved with to encourage engagement, connection and wellness. Our week looks like this...



## Parent Power Group

**Monday 12:30-1:15pm**

Many colleagues are juggling their day job with parenting and educating children at home. This is an opportunity to connect with and seek support from other parents in the division. Whether you talk about the kids or take the time to have some time for you, we salute you for holding for being multi-tasking geniuses/superheroes.

## Tea at 3 Tuesday

**Tuesday 3pm-3:30pm**

Every Tuesday at **3pm** we host a virtual '**Tea at 3**' which is all about connecting with colleagues. Some of you may feel a bit out of the loop if you are working from home or adapting to a new way of working so this is an opportunity to check in, chat about anything other than work and take a well-earned break with a brew.



## Wednesday Wellbeing Meditation

**Wednesday 12-12:30pm**

'**30 Minute Guided Skype Meditation**'. This is an opportunity to switch off, be in the moment and promote relaxation. You don't have to have any prior experience with meditation or mindfulness, just bring yourself along and enjoy.

## Manager Peer Group

**Thursday 3:30-4:15pm**

Managers have a really challenging task to support others, maintain business as usual and communicate the raft of information being shared (whilst also supporting yourselves and your families). This is an opportunity for managers to connect with and chat freely to peers across the division.



## Staff Support Drop In

**Friday 10am-2pm**

Every Friday there is be a '**Skype Staff Support Drop In**'. This is an opportunity to have a chat to a trained member of the staff support team about how you are feeling and/or what support is available to you. The team are also available for one to one sessions throughout the week too. [Call or email](#) us now.

## What resources have we used?

I work really closely with Chelsea Banham, our HR Business Partner who has the HR lead for wellbeing + engagement and together we have created a myriad of support tools. For example, Chelsea has recently created the 'Wellbeing Wall' & 'Staff Wellbeing Summary' which were sent to all staff. These resources mainly come about from requests from engagement & wellbeing champions, staff support members or mine and Chelsea's brain. I have shared all our tools to be put on the intranet in the hope that we can save you some time having to create your own.

We are also very grateful to have around 130 (amazing) engagement & wellbeing champions across the North West who are working hard to support and engage staff during this unsettling time. Many champions have taken it upon themselves to organise local versions of our support sessions. They have been finding unique and fun ways to connect with colleagues like:

- **Skype quizzes** (in teams or across clusters)
- **Group Fitness Breaks** (dance, stretching, yoga etc)
- **Connection Sessions** (for example Talking Tuesdays' in teams or with a buddy system)

Although seeing myself on camera kills my soul slightly, I also like to create videos and other materials to mix things up a bit. For example, I sent out the below in this week's blog about using breathwork to ease stress and anxiety.



### Square Breathing

Square breathing is a type of breathwork that can shift your energy, connect you more deeply with your body, calm your nervous system, and decrease stress. This is one of the main techniques I use day to day to managing anxiety so I hope it is helpful. Watch the ['Square Breathing to Ease Stress & Anxiety'](#) video I recorded to find out what to do and how it might help. I'd love to hear how you got on so please leave me a comment on the video or send me an email 😊.

## How has it been received?

Although sharing feedback for some reason makes me squirm a little, I am very happy to report that the feedback received from colleagues so far has been overwhelmingly positive. Engagement with the sessions has been consistently great, for example we had 39 people join us for meditation last week and over 50 people signed up for this week's session. Here are a couple of things that colleagues have said about the offering:

"I live on my own and it is so nice to have somewhere to come to connect with other people"

My second session loved it so much. Will be back next week."

"Thanks, feeling chilled now, it's lovely to escape from all this for a little while"

I wholeheartedly believe that supporting colleagues and sharing information throughout this time is, as always, an absolute necessity. Looking after ourselves and others has never been more important so please reach out for support if you need it.

Feel free to get in touch if you have any questions.

Take care and be safe 🤗



**Sian Marron – North West Staff Engagement & Wellbeing Lead**