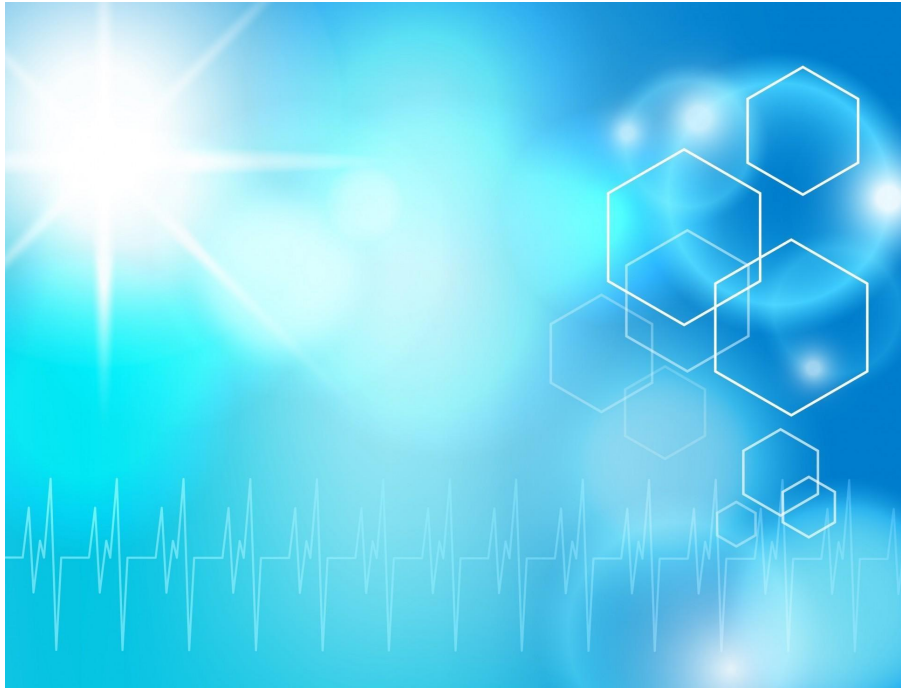


Health & Wellbeing Briefing



1 - Health & Wellbeing Briefing

May 2025

Employees with differing visual requirements may wish to use Accessibility View to access this briefing. Click on the three dots on the top right of this document and select Accessibility View from the list of options.

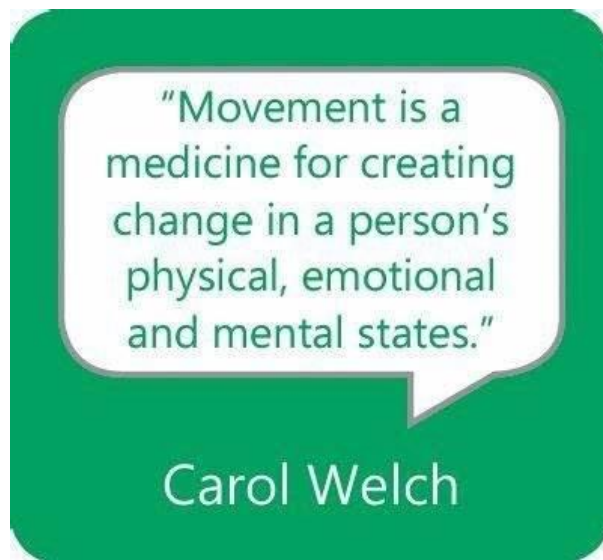
There are a range of different sources of support included in this briefing, but, if you are finding things difficult at the moment you may wish to raise any of the topics covered, or any other issue, with your manager at your next one-to-one meeting.

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Quote of the month



Mental Health Awareness Week



Mental Health Awareness Week will take place from Monday 13 - Sunday 19 May 2024. The theme, as set by the Mental Health Foundation, is "Movement, moving for our mental health".

Movement is important for our mental health, and when life is busy, it can be tricky to find time for wellbeing-boosting activities. So this mental health awareness week, we would like you to find moments for movement in your daily routine. Even a few minutes of movement can make a big difference. Sometimes we store negative emotions in our bodies, so shaking,

stretching or walking can help us let go. A brisk walk before, during or after work can serve as a helpful mental break from daily challenges. Why not use the time you spend waiting to move more? For example, when you are waiting on the kettle to boil; or the bus to arrive, or the lift to arrive, or better still take the stairs.

If you are hybrid working and in the office get some of your colleagues together at lunch time and go for a walk. Have walking meetings.

Remember, any amount of physical activity is good for you. Start easy, find what you enjoy, and keep moving - it's a natural boost for your mental health.

You may also be interested in a free event being facilitated by Services for Young People on Saturday, 18 May 2024 from 11.00am to 3.00pm, in the Civic Chambers, 2 High Street, Perth. The day will be filled with informal, fun and interactive stalls and is open to all age ranges. Find out what mental health and wellbeing support is available in your local area whilst enjoying a complimentary tea or coffee.

Do you have a story to tell?



We are keen to find out more about the health and wellbeing of our employees and share your stories to help and inspire others.

We are looking for real lived experiences and your story can remain anonymous if you wish.

You could write something yourself or have a chat with someone from Human Resources who can write it up for you.

Please get in touch with Alison Ramsay, AMRamsay@pkc.gov.uk to share your hints and tips.

Sun Protection and Skin Cancer



Spending time outside is a great way to be physically active, reduce stress, and get Vitamin D. However, protection from UV rays from the sun is important all year, not just during the summer. UV rays can reach you on cloudy days and cool days. You can reduce your risk of sun damage and skin cancer by staying in the shade, wearing a hat and sunglasses, and using the appropriate sunscreen.

The following stories have come from our employees. We have removed their names, to respect their privacy, and would take this opportunity to thank them for sharing some difficult details, but they wanted to raise awareness of the potential risks and protection required when enjoying the sun.

Employee 1's story:

"It is something I am quite passionate about for a couple of reasons. My younger cousin developed skin cancer some years ago now, which started as a small mole on her leg but over time sadly developed and metastasised. She passed away almost 10 years ago in her 40's. I too have been diagnosed with skin cancer. The year after my cousin found the mole on her leg, I found a 'dodgy' mole on my arm which was removed and was pre cancerous. The year after she passed away, I found a mole on my back and that time was not as lucky as that was diagnosed as a melanoma which had to be surgically removed, followed by many years of appointments to ensure that the actual cancer did not return. I have now had 4 moles removed and still have a number of non melanoma moles primarily basal cell.

The reason I am so passionate however is because neither myself nor my cousin used sunbeds nor were we ever sun worshippers – lying on a beach doing nothing all day was not for us at all. I think the message is probably better now than it was, but anyone can develop skin cancer and I try as much as possible to encourage people to use sun cream even in this country on days when the sun may not feel as hot but those rays are still getting through."

Employee 2's story:

"I have fair, freckly skin, and was quite complacent about using sunscreen or wearing a hat on my bald head.

I found a mark on my arm and didn't think anything about it, just thought it was a spot. It gradually got bigger, so a bit concerned, I went to visit my GP. I was told it was a wart and got it frozen off at the surgery. Unfortunately, over the next few months it came back and spread slightly, so the GP prescribed a cream to try and get rid of it. There was no difference on completion of the prescription, so I went back a third time to the GP to be prescribed more cream.

I was becoming more concerned so I decided to go back to the GP, for a fourth visit. It was a different GP this time and they took photos and sent them away for analysis. I didn't think anything of it, better to be safe than sorry. A couple of days later, I received a call to say the results had come back with a diagnosis of Bowens Disease, an early stage of skin cancer and thankfully is easily treatable. I am currently receiving treatment and it is starting to shrink so fingers crossed the cream will do the trick. Worse case scenario, it will be removed via minor surgery.

My message is if anyone has any marks, that has had a slow growth, and are not sure what it is, get it checked, and persist until you do. Also, I now use high factor sunscreen, a baseball cap and long sleeved t-shirts when going out in the sun."

Most skin cancers can be cured if detected early. It is important to check your skin regularly for any changing moles or marks, and if in doubt, consult a healthcare professional.

Stay safe in the sun!

Deaf Awareness Week



Scheduled to take place from 6-12 May 2024, this week aims to raise awareness about the challenges faced by the deaf community and educate others on how they can provide support.

Learning how to communicate with people who are deaf or have hearing loss is a huge part of making people feel seen, heard and involved. The Royal National Institute for Deaf People has tips on how to communicate with someone who is deaf or has hearing loss - [click here](#)

You may also be interested in Deaf and BSL Awareness training on 21 May 2024 - [click here to sign up](#)

Coeliac Awareness Month



Coeliac disease, also known as celiac disease, is a serious condition that affects your digestive system and your whole body. It is caused by an abnormal immune reaction to gluten, a protein found in wheat and other grains. Gluten triggers inflammation and damage to the lining of your small intestine, preventing it from absorbing nutrients.

The only way to treat coeliac disease is to avoid gluten completely for life. That means eliminating all foods that contain wheat, rye, barley, and checking food labels for hidden sources of gluten. Following a gluten free diet can be challenging, but it can also improve your health and quality of life.

More information on Coeliac disease is available on [NHS inform](#).

National Walking Month



Walking is one of the easiest ways to improve your health and stay connected, helping us feel less lonely and isolated. Walking is free, flexible and fun, and it's proven to have huge benefits for our health and wellbeing. Use the [#Try20 Checklist](#) for some ideas to go, or get started, walking.

Take your meeting outside! Sitting for long periods of time has been shown to dramatically increase your chances of suffering from health problems. As well as getting active, a short walk during the working day will boost your energy and productivity. According to

neuroscientists, walking increases blood flow to the brain, which helps people to express ideas more fluently. And - regular exercise has been shown to cause an overall work performance boost of about 15%! So, grab a colleague and get those creative juices flowing. Each meeting could have a different route. You could explore the local area while having your meeting. Working from home? Take that call on the go!

Here is an employee's source of inspiration - Chris Archibald, Community Justice Assistant, organises a monthly walk for all of the staff based in St Martin's House (Social Workers, Business admin, Safer Communities, Managers etc.), choosing a different location each month and walks that are more accessible to *all* abilities to encourage participation and inclusion. People have brought along partners, dogs and even well-behaved children! It's a great way for colleagues to get to know each other out of the office as well as all of the health benefits that walking provides, physically and mentally. If you are interested in joining the walking group please contact Chris direct - CArchibald@pkc.gov.uk

[Good For You Club](#)



Good For You Club (GFYC) is a Social Enterprise building a community for women aged 40 to 80+ in Perth and Kinross. The primary focus is to promote and support a longer, healthier life for members, while ensuring that no-one feels lonely or isolated along the way. Find like-minded women matching your existing interests or why not try something new? Click [here](#) for more information.

[Learning and Personal Development](#)



There are a variety of Wellbeing courses being run during May. To find out more and sign up click [here](#).

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)



Whether you're facing problems at work or at home, you can access impartial, confidential advice with our new dedicated Employee Assistance Programme, which is part of the Vivup benefits platform.

Qualified counsellors can offer support for many different issues, including - anxiety; bereavement; stress; depression; workplace issues; trauma; relationships; finances; family difficulties.

The telephone helpline is available 24/7, 365 days a year and is completely confidential and free to anyone needing in the moment support. To access the service, simply call 0800 023 9324 free from any standard UK landline or mobile phone.

Access to Work Mental Health Support



Able Futures delivers the [Access to Work Mental Health Support Service](#) on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

There is no charge for the Service, it is not a counselling service but is completely confidential, and can provide up to nine months support, from a mental health professional, to help you build self-care and wellbeing routines, and learn new ways to manage your mental health through life's ups and downs.

If you feel you could benefit from some support with your mental health and wellbeing, call Able Futures free on 0800 321 3137 from 8am to 10.30pm, Monday to Friday to find out more.

Further information on Virtual Appointments will be available soon.

Other Useful Reads

[Meaningful May | Action for Happiness](#)

[Issue 52 - Community Engagement News \(cloud.microsoft\)](#)

[Issue 53 - Community Engagement News \(cloud.microsoft\)](#)

Previous Health & Wellbeing Briefings

Have you missed previous briefings? You can view them on the website on the [Wellbeing Support page](#)