



# WELLBEING STRATEGY



# INTRODUCTION

**NCG recognises that providing good health and wellbeing support to our employees is not only about increasing productivity and reducing sickness absence, but by promoting good physical, mental and psychological health and wellbeing, it also helps support employees to lead healthier and happier lives, both at home and work.**

This wellbeing strategy is aligned to NCG's wider business strategy and directly supports the 'People Pillar' of being 'ambitious and responsible educators and leaders'. It is underpinned by NCG's core values of being 'inclusive and diverse', 'trusting and respecting our communities', 'taking ownership whilst working collaboratively' and 'inspiring excellence and curiosity', ensuring these are embedded into practice.

## OUR COLLEGES

**Carlisle College  
Kidderminster College  
Lewisham College  
Newcastle College  
Newcastle Sixth Form College  
Southwark College  
West Lancashire College**

# AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the strategy is to create an environment where employee health and wellbeing is integrated into day-to-day practices, and to bring together key stakeholders from across the Group who have a role to play in relation to this. The strategy will:

- provide clear leadership and direction in relation to employee wellbeing.
- ensure there is optimal engagement with all stakeholders and effective partnerships.
- ensure an integrated top down approach is taken.

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## THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY ARE TO:

- improve the overall physical, mental and psychological health and wellbeing of all employees and to remove related stigma wherever possible.
- create wellbeing boards at local and group level to explore, facilitate and support the roll out of a broad range health and wellbeing activities.
- positively impact attendance at work and to provide better support for those returning to work following a period of absence.
- promote positive mental health amongst employees to support improved morale and to help develop resilience.
- develop and encourage collaboration and cross-college wellbeing activity, and sharing of best practice across NCG.
- build a physically and mentally healthy workplace culture which has a truly positive impact on the employee journey, supporting employees to build their personal resilience and psychological health and wellbeing to lead healthier and more productive lives both at home and at work.
- support us in attracting talent and retaining high performing colleagues.



# DELIVERY MODEL



## HEALTHY

### **HEALTHY (EMPLOYEE SPECIFIC):**

This pillar focuses on the actual physical health and mental wellbeing of employees across NCG.

i.e. accessibility to OH and our employee assistance programme, counselling, suitable workplace environments and support for agile working, promoting the use of wellness plans, employee stress management training, FIKA mental health training etc.

### **INCLUSIVE (COMMUNITY AND CULTURE SPECIFIC):**

This pillar focuses on the broader community aspects of wellbeing to encourage a positive and inclusive culture across NCG which promotes the sharing of best practice.

i.e. mental health champions, a monthly wellbeing calendar, an integrated wellbeing approach which is present in key employment policies and processes, seeking employee views and local feedback on wellbeing and how to improve it, providing more accessible resources and appropriate signposting, identifying more effective internal platforms to promote wellbeing activity.



## INCLUSIVE



## INSPIRED

### **INSPIRED (LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SPECIFIC):**

This pillar focuses on the role of leadership and the demonstrating of commitment to wellbeing from the top down, as well as enhancing management capability and awareness through dedicated coaching, upskilling and sharing best practice.



# OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES

## HEALTHY (EMPLOYEE SPECIFIC - LINKED TO ACTUAL PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MENTAL WELLBEING RESOURCE AND ACTIVITIES)

	NCG WIDE	INDIVIDUAL COLLEGES / SERVICE
<b>First 12 months (initial action)</b>	<p>NCG launch to coincide with the start of the new academic year. This will be referred to as “<b>Working Well</b>”; and is a full month dedicated to group wide employee wellbeing initiatives and information which includes the following:</p>	
	<p>Launch of new Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) - Validium and services on offer.</p>	<p>Local promotion of EAP to increase awareness and visibility of services on offer.</p>
	<p>Launch of a health check for all employees; a questionnaire to be carried out independently to enable any trends to be identified and targeted group wide support to be implemented.</p>	<p>Encourage local participation of the health check questionnaire and facilitate targeted local onsite support as required.</p>
	<p>Wellness plan template to be developed and made available to all employees / managers to support more pro-active management of wellbeing issues.</p>	<p>Local education piece required to ensure that wellness plans become an integral part of day to day management of employees i.e. in 1-2-1’s, team meetings, local forums etc.</p>
	<p>Promotion campaign reminding colleagues of existing NCG wellbeing benefits and initiatives i.e. Cycle to Work scheme, reclaiming cost of flu vaccinations and eye care tests, flexible working options to create a healthy work / life balance etc.</p>	<p>Ensure local visibility or signposting of wellbeing benefits and initiatives, making such information known and easily accessible to all employees.</p>
<b>1 – 3 years (ongoing action)</b>	<p>Ensure all employees have access to appropriate wellbeing training modules linked to their role, which will be included in the NCG colleague training programme i.e. FIKA mental health training to enable all employees to understand and manage personal stress and to build personal resilience etc.</p>	<p>Identify any local employee themes / considerations to be fed back and included (subject to adequate resource and funding) into the NCG colleague training programme.</p>

## INCLUSIVE (COMMUNITY SPECIFIC - DEVELOPMENT OF A POSITIVE AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE SURROUNDING WELLBEING)

	NCG WIDE	INDIVIDUAL COLLEGES / SERVICE
<b>First 12 months (initial action)</b>	<p>Creation of a Group Wellbeing Board to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• oversee the implementation of the employee wellbeing strategy.</li> <li>• promote and seek out opportunities for good physical, mental and psychological wellbeing activities.</li> <li>• provide central wellbeing support, resources, advice and signposting.</li> <li>• help to develop measures of success to support us in monitoring the success of our wellbeing strategy.</li> <li>• promote collaboration on issues that have an impact on health and wellbeing of our employees.</li> </ul>	<p>Creation of College Wellbeing Groups to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide the autonomy to develop and implement local wellbeing plans and offers, but that remain linked to the overarching strategy.</li> <li>• ensure adequate resource is identified locally to support senior leadership teams to deliver the agreed strategy.</li> <li>• adopt an open-door approach whereby employees can raise any wellbeing concerns or considerations outside of specific forums.</li> <li>• gather post activity / initiative feedback from employees on outcomes and their views / experience.</li> </ul>
	Development of a network of NCG Mental Health First Aiders who will be assigned to all colleges (subject to business case approval).	Development of a network of NCG Mental Health First Aiders who will be assigned to all colleges (subject to business case approval).
	Roll out / make wellbeing resources easily accessible centrally i.e. podcasts, TED talks, good news stories.	Signposting to employees as and when required.
	Update People Portal to include a rebranded / refreshed area which will be used to host the support on offer, wellbeing information and resources and signposting to specialist organisations.	Local managers to incorporate wellbeing into employee induction and ensure all employees are made aware of and have access to the People Portal. Signposting to employees as and when required.
<b>1 – 3 years (ongoing action)</b>	<p>Collect employee views regarding wellbeing on an agreed basis i.e. quarterly, annually and use the results to continually develop and improve the NCG wellbeing offer. This could be done as its own dedicated wellbeing survey or may be rolled up with future engagement surveys.</p>	Encourage local participation of wellbeing / engagement forums and surveys to identify local requirements and facilitate targeted outputs.
	<p>Carry out a full review of key employment policies and processes such as recruitment, induction, probation, 1-2-1's and performance management to include awareness of wellbeing related issues for effective and timely advice, guidance, support and signposting. The objective to give us a more holistic and well-rounded approach which would support a good employee journey from initial appointment and right throughout the employment lifecycle.</p>	Engage with the central P&D team to work collaboratively and feedback any wellbeing suggestions regarding employment policies and processes, in order to improve current practice and to ensure that local requirements are considered / represented.

## INSPIRED (LEADERSHIP SPECIFIC - TO GIVE COMMITMENT FROM THE TOP DOWN AND DEVELOP MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY WHEN DEALING WITH WELLBEING)

	NCG WIDE	INDIVIDUAL COLLEGES / SERVICE
<b>First 12 months (initial action)</b>	Executive leadership team to champion workplace health and wellbeing at a group level and to encourage inclusion from respective colleges / business areas at all times.	Senior leadership teams to champion workplace health and wellbeing and embed it into SLT / Principalship meetings and management and college updates, helping us to demonstrate that wellbeing is at the forefront of all activity.
	Create case studies involving the executive leadership team, sharing their wellbeing stories and to support in the removal of stigma, whilst also allowing us to demonstrate our commitment to wellbeing from the top down.	Encourage senior leadership teams to also share their wellbeing stories which may have more impact at a local level.
	Provide good quality, accurate metrics and data which can be used to analyse and identify NCG wide wellbeing related trends, enabling more tailored and targeted support such as reducing employee sickness absence, staff turnover etc.	Analyse data at a local level, identifying issues and trends within each college and proactively implementing targeted support.
	Executive leadership to drive a culture of 'Brilliant at the Basics' through an expectation of consistently applied good people practice in support of improved health and wellbeing.	Line managers to be responsible for and to take ownership of the consistent application of good people practice at a local level, in relation to health and wellbeing issues via policies and processes such as 1-2-1 meeting's, return to work interviews, OH referrals, flexible working arrangements.
	Publicise and continue to embed current NCG commitments following sign-up to employee wellbeing schemes such as AOC Charter and TU 'Dying to Work' Charter.	Publicise and continue to embed current NCG commitments following sign-up to employee wellbeing schemes such as AOC Charter and TU 'Dying to Work' Charter.
	Executive commitment to the introduction of the College Mental Health Self-evaluation tool (C-Met), which will take NCG through 10 steps to assess its current position in relation to mental health and wellbeing. Topics covered include leadership and management, ethos and environment, curriculum, the student voice and staff development and support.	Nominated local management leads to self-assess their respective college and build a report demonstrating how well they are doing, and identifying any gaps in knowledge and practice which need to be addressed.
<b>1 – 3 years (ongoing action)</b>	Ensure all managers have access to appropriate wellbeing training modules linked to their role, which will be included in the NCG colleague training programme i.e. policy, process and people systems coaching and upskilling to increase capability.	Identify any local management themes / considerations to be fed back and included (subject to adequate resource and funding) into the NCG colleague training programme.
	Actively seek out and work towards the achievement of national wellbeing accreditations to support us in becoming an Employer of Choice.	Actively seek out and work towards the achievement of local wellbeing accreditations to support us in becoming an Employer of Choice.

# BENEFITS

BENEFITS	HOW WILL THIS BE MEASURED?
Improved engagement from employees and managers.	Employee / wellbeing survey data.
Improved attendance at work.	Sickness absence data to identify a reduction in days lost and therefore cost, frequency and nature of illnesses.  Feedback and data from wellbeing initiatives carried out from a local and group level.
Attracting top quality and retaining high performing talent.	Turnover data and leavers questionnaires.  Future succession planning and monitoring of data surrounding internal promotion.
Improved uptake in quality and outcome of Occupational Health and EAP referrals.	Occupational Health & EAP utilisation data.  Feedback from coaching and training sessions
Improved utilisation of key policies and processes to support health and wellbeing issues.	1-2-1 records, completion of RTW documents, reduction in formal ER caseload surrounding sickness absence and performance management.
Wellbeing activity undertaken from NCG / College perspective? Cross-college activity.	Promotion in NCG and local communications, best practice and feedback shared within the local and Group Wellbeing boards.
Improving productivity.	Setting of SMART objectives and a robust Performance Management process to evaluate and monitor progress.
Building a positive workplace culture.	Employee engagement surveys or employee feedback process.  Reduced complaints / grievances.  Reduced absenteeism, analysed by sickness absence data.





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#### **VISIT OUR WEBSITES**

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