

Staff wellbeing

Maternity and Children Quality Improvement Collaborative (MCQIC) Safety Culture Webinar Series

The [Scottish Patient Safety Programme](#) (SPSP) is a national quality improvement programme that aims to improve the safety and reliability of care and reduce harm. SPSP supports improvements in safety across a wide range of care settings including maternity, neonatal and paediatric services.

The [MCQIC](#) focuses on improving outcomes for babies, children, mothers and families. We work collaboratively with the maternity, neonatal and paediatric units within 14 NHS boards across Scotland to help deliver safe care through quality improvement methodology.

The [Essentials of Safe Care \(EoSC\)](#) are a key element of the SPSP's work. This is a practical package of evidence-based guidance and support that enables Scotland's health and social care system to deliver safe care. It aims to accelerate sharing of learning and improvement work through a range of engagement and learning opportunities.

Our [driver diagram](#) outlines key elements that support our aim of delivering safe care to every person, within every setting, every time.

In spring 2022 MCQIC held a series of webinars focusing on the EoSC primary driver of **leadership** to promote a **culture of safety at all levels**. This summary provides an overview of the webinar focusing on **staff wellbeing**. A [recording of this webinar](#) can be accessed on our website.

Essentials of Safe Care: Driver Diagram

Aim	Primary drivers	Secondary drivers
To enable the delivery of Safe Care for every person within every system every time	Person centred systems and behaviours are embedded and support safety for everyone	Structures and process that enable safe, person centred care Inclusion and involvement Workforce capacity and capability
	Safe communications within and between teams	Skills: appropriate language, format and content Practice: use of standardised tools for communications Critical Situations: management of communications in different situations
	Leadership to promote a culture of safety at all levels	Psychological safety Staff wellbeing Systems for learning
	Safe consistent clinical and care processes across health and social care settings	Reliable implementation of standard infection prevention and control precautions Safe staffing



Rediscovering joy in work: placing kindness at the heart of our work

Dr Camilla Kingdon, Consultant Neonatologist and President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

In her keynote presentation, Dr Kingdon talked about some of the issues which impact staff wellbeing and suggested solutions to support this.

The social context and why it matters

In his work, Don Berwick highlights that healthcare professionals and patients are currently in an uncomfortable place. Berwick believes this is because of changes in how healthcare professionals are perceived and increased accountability, measurement and close scrutiny. This has resulted in healthcare professionals feeling misunderstood and patients feeling helpless and suspicious¹.

Why has staff wellbeing become such a challenge

In 2013, the [Francis Report](#) shared findings of a public inquiry into failings at the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust. Among other findings, the report highlights:

- significant issues in patient care
- disconnect between clinical and managerial staff,
- an intensive focus on financial targets, and
- evidence of burnout in staff².

What is burnout

There are three criteria for burnout:

- ***“emotional exhaustion***
- ***depersonalisation or feeling negative about one’s career, and***
- ***reduced professional efficacy and productivity.”***

Prevalence of burnout

Burnout in healthcare workers can be particularly prevalent.

24%

Trainee doctors reported feeling burnt out because of their work to a high or very degree according to a [national training survey conducted in 2018](#)³.

44%

NHS Staff in England reported feeling unwell due to work-related stress in the past year in a [staff survey conducted in 2020](#)⁴.

67%

UK midwives reported moderate burnout according to a [study published in 2019](#)⁵.

Healthcare workers can be particularly vulnerable to burnout. Many healthcare workers are altruistic and driven by putting patients first. While these are good qualities, they can leave individuals more vulnerable to burnout.

There are links between staff wellbeing and patient care and safety. We know that staff cannot provide the highest quality of care if they are experiencing burnout.

Rediscovering joy in work: placing kindness at the heart of our work

Dr Kingdon recommends three themes to help achieve a healthy, thriving workforce that can deliver safe care;

1. Leadership
2. Systems, and
3. Personal.

These themes are discussed in detail below.



“There is now an imperative to address the culture of the NHS. The size of the challenge ahead is massive. A conscious focus and leadership that is compassionate is the secret to success.”

Proposed solutions to support workforce wellbeing

Theme	Summary	Further information
1. Leadership	Compassionate leadership where leaders listen to and engage with staff support staff to feel invested in and coproduce solutions to address issues. This can lead to reductions in sickness and in addition, health organisations that listen to staff are more likely to be innovative.	Read work by Michael West to learn more about compassionate leadership ⁶ .
	Compassionate leadership can be complex, so health and social care leaders should be supported to develop these skills.	
2. Systems	In his work, Don Berwick discusses the need to develop a new era of healthcare. The new era should reduce the focus on excessive measurement and finance. Instead, it should focus on civility, improvement of science, transparency and coproduction.	Read Don Berwick's work on Era 3 for Medicine and Health Care ¹ .
3. Personal	Intelligent kindness	Penny Campling's work provides more information on intelligent kindness ⁷ .
	Learning from excellence	To learn more, visit the learning from excellence webpages ⁸ .
	Be kind to ourselves	Visit the compassionate mind webpages ⁹ to learn more.



We Care, NHS Grampian

Dr Emma Hepburn, Clinical Psychologist and We Care programme lead, NHS Grampian

Dr Emma Hepburn highlighted the importance of improving staff wellbeing and the associated challenges through the work of NHS Grampian.

Improving the wellbeing of the health workforce leads to better patient outcomes for a number of measures, including reduced infection and mortality rates and improved patient experience and satisfaction. However, there are several challenges when looking to make improvements to wellbeing.

- Wellbeing has many definitions, so it can be difficult to know what to focus on and how to measure it.
- There are many factors which can contribute to wellbeing. These can be both personal and work related.

- Different staff groups will have different wellbeing needs based on their roles.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative impact on our wellbeing.

NHS Grampian has established a programme of work focusing on wellbeing. We Care is an umbrella programme which pulls together wellbeing projects and communications in a coherent way for staff to access. It also aims to identify gaps in wellbeing provision and allocate resources to meet these needs.

The table below provides an overview of the We Care programme. More information on this programme can be found on the [We Care website](#).

Function	Project	Description
Projects	Team support and recovery	“All teams have access to support that matches their needs.” As part of this work, we hold sessions with team leaders to explore their actions to support wellbeing. By supporting team leaders to identify what is going well, they can build on this and consider areas for improvement.
	Personal resilience and mental health	“Individuals have access to timely support for maintaining and improving psychological health.” This includes work to bring together opportunities for support so it can be better communicated and utilised.”
	Remote and hybrid working	“Staff and managers are helped to maximise their work-life balance in light of changes to how, where and when work is done.” As staff and managers become more comfortable with remote and hybrid working, we will adapt this project to meet arising needs
	Health lifestyle report	“People are supported in building and maintaining healthy life choices.” For example, this work has included a recent step challenge and a menopause working group.
Support	Communication and website admin	This involves “maintaining up-to-date online content, marketing resources and communicating changes.” The programme focuses on implementing relevant projects for staff; therefore communication is vital to hear what staff need support with.
	Survey and evaluation	This work helps to “understand both the wellbeing of the workforce and the impact of interventions.” An example of this is quarterly pulse surveys and regular thematic analyses.

Further information



You can watch the [webinar on our webpages](#).



View our [presentation slides](#) used on the day.



Our [reading list](#) accompanies the webinar.



Read more about [Essentials of Safe Care](#) on our website. Case studies on the systems for learning, staff wellbeing and psychological safety series are now available on our [website](#).



Find us on twitter at [@mcqicspsp](#), [#spspmcqc](#) and [#spsp247](#)



The [National Wellbeing Hub](#) provides support to those who work in health and social care.

References

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