

# Case study: East of England Ambulance Service

## Building the Foundation for a Wellbeing Programme

In early 2022 the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) tripled the size of its wellbeing team as the first step in enhancing the Trust's wellbeing support offer to staff. Early efforts have been focused on three preparatory activities; **Educate, Connect and Measure**. These principles were adopted from the lessons-learned phase of a large successful [Ministry of Defence \(MoD\) wellbeing project](#) and are being used to underpin the development a structured, evidence-based wellbeing programme.

## Educate, Connect and Measure

The initial phase of this process (**Educate**) simply guided the EEAST senior leadership team towards a shared understanding of what 'Wellbeing' meant to us as an organisation. This phase focused on the concept of wellbeing being an 'outcome' driven by a wide range of workplace factors and drew extensively on evidence from the [What Works Centre for Wellbeing](#). Leaders were also invited to consider the benefits of frameworks such as the [ACAS Mental Health Model](#) which can help break workplace wellbeing challenges down into more manageable components and clearly identifies the responsibilities of individuals, managers and leaders.

The second phase (**Connect**) focused on the creation of a cross-EEAST wellbeing network to establish a motivated community of interest for the central wellbeing team to engage with. The network receives monthly

newsletters that seek to promote better quality wellbeing conversations and raise awareness of upcoming wellbeing events and training opportunities. Network members are encouraged to share experiences and to get involved in steering wellbeing project activity.

The final phase (**Measure**) reviewed existing wellbeing and mental health KPIs and metrics to identify suitable data benchmarks from which EEAST can measure the effectiveness of future wellbeing interventions. A new set of quantitative and qualitative metrics have been developed to monitor our progress.



This foundation-building approach has taken time and we were very conscious that, despite the significant effort that was underway behind the scenes, much of the EEAST Wellbeing Team's preparatory activity would be invisible to most Trust staff. EEAST therefore took the decision to invest in many initiatives that could quickly demonstrate to staff that their Trust is taking its Mental Health Commitment seriously.

The first initiative was a Trust-wide Mindfulness offer (Headspace). This intervention has a proven evidence base, has low admin overheads for the newly formed wellbeing team and has the potential to generate valuable monthly insights into the nature of wellbeing support that staff are seeking from their Mindfulness practice. These insights will help us to prioritise future wellbeing team activity ensuring that we can focus on the issues that matter most to staff.

The second initiative has been the preparation of a comprehensive Mental Health Awareness Training Programme aimed at 500 managers and 100 Wellbeing Champions across EEAST. The aim is to rapidly improve the confidence of key staff to discuss wellbeing and mental health issues at local level and directly address some of the core elements of the Mental Health at Work Commitment.

EEAST is also exploring more preventative options, particularly resilience training for call centre staff exposed to traumatic experiences whilst at work. A pilot project is currently underway to trial a MoD training course which was originally developed to help military and civilian staff develop more effective coping strategies when dealing with distressing visual and audio material.

The Trust is also looking at ways in which staff on temporary redeployment due to ill health can volunteer short-term to be involved in wellbeing projects. We'll be exploring whether engagement with wellbeing projects can assist recovery and provide a sense of purpose for staff experiencing ill health.

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