

# PEB paper on Mental Health – June 2021

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## How has covid impacted people’s mental health and wellbeing in Trafford?

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on all our mental health. While most of us will emerge without lasting negative effects on our mental health, some communities and people with specific characteristics are at far greater risk of worsening mental health. These include: those living in poverty, poor quality housing or with precarious or no employment; those living with an existing mental health problem, including addiction to drugs, alcohol or gambling; older people who are more likely be bereaved by Covid-19 and may be at greater risk of social isolation; women and children exposed to violence and trauma at home; people with long-term health conditions; people with long COVID; and people from black and minority communities where prevalence of Covid-19 is higher and outcomes are worse.

It is becoming clear that the impact of Covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing will be felt for years to come and the ramifications are likely to be pervasive and long-lasting.

More people are now in contact with mental health services than ever previously recorded, and in a survey to measure the impact of COVID-19, 45% of Trafford residents reported high levels of anxiety. Sadly, we have also seen a marked increase in suicides in Trafford over the last year compared to the year before.

## What can people do to promote their mental wellbeing?

There is no health without mental health - it is a positive resource that allows us to fulfil our potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to our community.

The 5 ways to wellbeing are simple and proven actions that we can all take to find balance, build resilience and boost our mental health and wellbeing. They are:

### 1. Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world.

It’s clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages.

A few ideas for making a connection:

- Talk to someone instead of sending an email
- Speak to someone new
- Ask how someone's weekend was and really listen when they tell you
- Put five minutes aside to find out how someone really is

## **2. Be active**

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being.

But it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise.

Here are a few ideas:

Take the stairs not the lift

Go for a walk at lunchtime, perhaps with a friend or colleague so you can connect too

Get off the bus one stop earlier than usual and walk the final part of your journey

Do some 'easy exercise', like stretching, before you start your working day

## **3. Take notice**

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness. Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities.

Heightened awareness also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make positive choices based on your own values and motivations.

Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you. Here are a few ideas:

Get a plant for your workspace

Have a 'clear the clutter' day

Take notice of how your colleagues are feeling or acting

Take a different walking or cycling route on one of your regular journeys

Visit a new place for lunch

## **4. Learn**

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. Evidence suggests that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift older people out of depression.

The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

Here are a few learning ideas:

Find out something about your colleagues  
Sign up for a class  
Read the news or a book  
Set up a book club  
Do a crossword or Sudoku  
Research something you've always wondered about  
Learn a new word

## 5. Give

Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research. People who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Research suggests that acts of giving and kindness can help improve our mental wellbeing by:

- creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- helping you connect with other people

It could be small acts of kindness towards other people, or larger ones like volunteering in your local community. Some examples of the things to try include:

- saying thank you to someone for something they have done for you
- spending time with friends or relatives who need support or company
- offering to help someone you know with DIY or a work project
- volunteering in your community, such as helping at a school, hospital or care home

## Promoting public mental health

The most important protective factors for mental health and the most important determinants of mental wellbeing lie in the family, the environment, the community and the society we live in.

Engagement, both community and individual is central to public mental health. At a community level this is about building on assets and involving communities in framing the issues and the solutions, and at the individual level it's about developing individual strengths and resilience.

### Wellbeing at work

Working with local employers to be inclusive, to tackle stigma, and to support the wellbeing of their workforce through appropriate working hours; time for a proper break; flexible working; compassionate management; staff networks etc. can transform the mental health and wellbeing of those Trafford residents who are in employment.

One of the unintended consequences of the pandemic is that many of us not on the frontline are now working from home. This has its benefits – we are able to stay safe, have reduced travel times to our places of work, and are able to work with less distractions. However, many of us are missing the connection and support of our colleagues, are less physically active during the working day, and find ourselves working harder and longer as the lines between home and work become blurred.

We are also less likely to feel connected with work developments around us, and unable to see the pressures our colleagues are under when not in physical contact on a regular basis.

Here is a [guide](#) to working well remotely: from the way that you set your space up and the seat you sit on; to the need to set reasonable work/rest boundaries. It is important to try and create and maintain a routine and schedule with designated spaces to work, where possible. It is also recommended to schedule regular breaks – whether it's to grab a glass of water or go for a short walk and get some fresh air.

### **Building community resilience**

Trafford is developing a community based working model with a network of six community hubs, with a consistent information and advice offer across the borough. The hubs are evolving to support their local communities to flourish as we emerge from covid restrictions – helping reduce loneliness and social isolation, providing advice through links with CAB, helping people with employment and to develop their skills, and also raising awareness and skills in understanding mental health and being able to help people who are struggling, whether this is listening or signposting on to other services. This involves three levels of mental health training:

Level 1 – Universal training offer - Shining a Light on Suicide – using GM materials – creating an awareness campaign with a very light touch training offer using existing GM training course. Aimed at both workforce and residents

Level 2 – Community training offer - making every contact count – looking to increase skills in the social prescribing workforce – using a train the trainer model – increased understanding of not just mental health but other aspects to – this evidence based approach to improving people's health and wellbeing by changing their behaviour.

Level 3 – enhanced awareness and support - mental health first aid training – looking to develop a Trafford Based organisation that would be willing to have people trained in MHFA and be able to deliver to the workforce across Trafford – this would be aimed at VCFSE, businesses, any organisation that wanted to have mental health first aiders to support their workforce – in Trafford.

Trafford also has social prescribing link workers based across the system in adult social care, primary care, secondary care and the VCFSE sector. A survey in late 2020 asked social prescribers how their work supported people's mental health and wellbeing, and this estimated that around 75% of all referrals to link workers had mental health and wellbeing as all or part of the referral reason.

Link workers were invited via the GMHSCP to take part in an RSPH pilot to become trainers, delivering Making Every Contact Count for Mental Health (MECC for MH) training for colleagues, partners, and volunteers. The aim of this was to increase skills and confidence around mental health for both link workers and for the wider workforce (both paid and volunteers) who might provide services or activities for people who were struggling with mental health or wellbeing. There are now

four link workers undergoing training to become MECC for MH trainers, and plans to expand this further over the next 6-12 months.

## Asking for help

It is important those communities, families, groups and individuals we know are being hardest hit can be supported now and as future ramifications of the pandemic occur.

The pandemic has been a challenging time for us all. That's why it's crucial that we are open and honest about the pressures and demands we are facing and know when we may need some support ourselves.

Here are some of the signs to pay attention to:

- high levels of distress
- inability to focus at work or home or unable to perform daily activities
- significantly increased your use of alcohol and/or substances
- those around you very worried about you
- worry about ability to keep oneself safe

We may recognise and experience some of these at some points and that can be fine from time to time. However, when they become more regular, or when it feels harder to get through the day to day challenges, that's when it could be time to ask for help.

### **Mental Health Support Services:**

**GMMH free 24 hour Helpline** is available for the general public by calling 0800 953 0285 (this service can also be accessed via 111).

**Community Mental Health Team:** If a person is already open to the CMHT they can contact the teams directly on either: 0161 358 1390 (North & West Trafford, Older Adults and Early Intervention Service) or 0161 357 1340 (South Trafford) between the hours of 9 am and 5 pm 7 days a week. Outside of these hours, contact the 24 hour helpline above.

### **In an emergency**

If you are concerned about an immediate risk of harm - either to yourself or someone else - phone **999**. If it is not an emergency but you require urgent advice, call **101** for non-emergency access to the police or NHS 111. Visit your local Accident & Emergency department if you need urgent physical health care or an urgent mental health assessment.

**Trafford Psychological Therapies Services** offer talking therapy (counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or psychology) for anyone over the age of 16 years old, who has a Trafford GP and may be struggling with a common mental health problem (Anxiety, Low Mood, Worry, Stress, Sleep,

Phobia, OCD, Trauma, etc.) Access is via GP referral or self-referral via: <https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/tpt/> or by calling Trafford Psychological Therapies on: 0161 357 1350.

**Self Help Services** provide e-therapy (online interactive CBT-based support for common mental health problems and also for sleep problems) as part of the Trafford Psychological Therapies pathway. Patients can make a self-referral to SHS if e-therapy is preferred.

<https://www.selfhelpservices.org.uk/service/trafford-etherapy-service-2/>

**Primary Care Mental Health Wellbeing Service** offers more specialist clinical input as well as bespoke social prescribing and wellbeing support for those with more complex psycho-social circumstances. Please call 0161 271 0919 or email [pcmhw.admin@gmmh.nhs.uk](mailto:pcmhw.admin@gmmh.nhs.uk). The service is open between 09:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday. There is a voice message facility for outside of office hours.

**Bluesci Wellbeing Support Line:** Call 0161 912 2177 between 10:00 – 14:00 (this is a local rate call and Bluesci will ring callers straight back). **Email:** [enquiries@bluesci.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bluesci.org.uk)

For further information about the four Bluesci Library and Wellbeing Centres visit: <https://oldtraffordwellbeing.org.uk/news/corona-virus/>

Bluesci is also offering wellbeing support over the phone to our Urdu speaking community every Tuesday between 10 am to 4 pm. Please ring or text Aliya Bukhari on 07547 548 101, and the call will be returned as soon as possible.

**Men's Support Group** in Trafford aims to support the wellbeing of men who are struggling. The group meet weekly to talk about things that are affecting them, provide support and teach strategies to deal with issues faced. No referral necessary. Old Trafford Wellbeing Centre, 54-56 Seymour Grove, Manchester, M16 0LN. Currently meeting on Zoom: Monday 18:30, Thursday 15:30 and Sunday 12:30. Contact 07894 971 434 [hello@directionsformen.org.uk](mailto:hello@directionsformen.org.uk)

### **People with Autism or Learning Disabilities**

Respect for All Helpline: 0161 532 4075

Our trained counsellors will listen and advise every caller. We can provide a follow up service for a limited time, for those who need more help than one phone call can provide. We can also refer onwards to other organisations who might be able to offer practical help.

Check the website for opening times and further information:

<https://www.respectforall.org.uk/counselling/helpline>

There is an answer phone available 24 hours a day. Please leave a message, and someone will call you back at a convenient time for you.

### **Carers:**

**Trafford Carers Centre** offers a range of information, support and resources via phone **0161 848 2400** or <https://www.traffordcarerscentre.org.uk/>

**Age UK Trafford Dementia and Memory Loss Advisory Service** for people living with dementia or memory loss and their carers: telephone 0161 746 9754. <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/trafford/>

**Trafford Domestic Abuse Service (TDAS)** Please call or text TDAS on **07534 066 029**. Leave your name and number if it safe for you to do so. A member of the team will get back to you. In case of an emergency please dial **999**. <https://www.tdas.org.uk/>

**Trafford Rape Crisis Helpline number: 0800 783 4608.**

If you would prefer to speak to a BME woman: **Helpline number: 0800 434 6484.**

**Email: [dorothytrc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dorothytrc@hotmail.co.uk).** If you'd prefer to email a BME woman:

[dorothy.bme@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dorothy.bme@hotmail.co.uk). See website for further details: <https://traffordrapecrisis.com/>

### Veterans

If you are a serving or ex-serving member of the military or a family member and require some help or information, please contact Sue Wright Phone: 0161 912 1173 Mobile: 07980 965 635

Email: [sue.wright@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:sue.wright@trafford.gov.uk)

Councillor Judith Lloyd Phone: 0161 865 8946 Mobile: 07545 921015 Email:

[judith.lloyd@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:judith.lloyd@trafford.gov.uk)

### Trafford Veterans

Provide peer support activities to armed forces and emergency service veterans, their families and members of the local community. All of activities are run by volunteers who share their hobbies and skills to help others

<https://www.neighbourly.com/TraffordVeteransUK>

**Trafford Community Response Hubs:** If you live alone, are struggling to make ends meet, are self-isolating or generally in need of advice or support please contact **0300 330 9073** (8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday).

<https://www.trafford.gov.uk/residents/community/partnerships-and-communities/Coronavirus-Covid-19-Trafford-Community-Response.aspx>

### Digital Support Offer:

**Shout** offer support in a crisis through a 24/7 text messaging service. Just need to **Text GM to 85258**. It's confidential and anonymous with no registration required.

**Living Life to the Full** offers online courses for people affected by low mood, anxiety or depression using cognitive behavioural therapy concepts. Materials have been designed to boost individual's ability to live well by improving feelings and beating stress. Available online and totally free of charge for Greater Manchester residents. Instant access to self-help support:

[hub.gmhsc.org.uk/mental-health/living-life-to-the-full](http://hub.gmhsc.org.uk/mental-health/living-life-to-the-full)

**SilverCloud** provide online programmes for adults (aged 16 years+) to help ease levels of stress, sleep better or to build resilience. They are self-help, confidential and secure. Instant access to self-help support: [GM.silvercloudhealth.com/signup](http://GM.silvercloudhealth.com/signup) **Wellbeing Advice & National Helplines:**

Information about local mental health and wellbeing services here

<https://hub.gmhsc.org.uk/mental-health/in-your-area/>

**NHS Every mind Matters:** [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters)

**Samaritans: 116 123** (free 24-hour helpline) if people are feeling stressed/anxious.

**Mind: 0300 123 3393** Self-help support to cope with anxiety and stress ([www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk))

**No Panic: 0844967 4848** Anxiety support/self-help relaxation techniques ([www.nopanic.or.uk](http://www.nopanic.or.uk))

**Anxiety UK: 03444 775774** (Manchester-based national charity to support people living with anxiety, phobias and OCD and whose anxiety may have increased during the pandemic). During the coronavirus pandemic, we will be extending our helpline hours to provide additional support in the evenings Mon-Fri 9.30am -10pm and over the weekend between 10am -8pm so that we can offer support to as many people as possible who need our help.

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/coronanxiety-support-resources/>

### **Bereavement Services:**

**Greater Manchester Bereavement Service** – For bereavement support or advice, call the Greater Manchester Bereavement Service on 0161 983 0902 or visit [www.greater-manchester-bereavement-service.org.uk](http://www.greater-manchester-bereavement-service.org.uk)

**Greater Manchester Suicide Bereavement Information Service:** A confidential information service for people bereaved or affected by suicide. The impact of bereavement through suicide is devastating – for family – for friends – for the community. The Suicide Bereavement Information Service has been set up to help answer your questions – whether it is seeking advice on immediate issues that need addressing or making you aware of ongoing support services.

Please contact: **0161 983 0700**. Alternatively contact via email on: [SB.IS@nhs.net](mailto:SB.IS@nhs.net)

Our telephone line is open Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm excluding Bank holiday.

This confidential service is for people living in: Bolton – Bury – Manchester – Oldham – Rochdale – Salford – Stockport – Tameside – Trafford – Wigan

### **Information & Resources for Support After Suicide:**

**Support After Suicide:** <https://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/support-guides/help-is-at-hand/>

**Shining a Light on Suicide:** <http://www.shiningalightonsuicide.org.uk/>