1. **Background & Aims**

One of the health and wellbeing priorities in the West Lothian Local Outcomes Improvement Plan is *Developing a preventative approach to population level wellbeing*. A partnership working group[[1]](#footnote-1) has been established to progress this and one of the actions is to develop and raise awareness of a West Lothian specific ‘6 Ways to Wellbeing’ model[[2]](#footnote-2), with both the public and the workforce.

The group undertook the wider wellbeing workforce survey to understand current awareness around mental health and wellbeing in West Lothian, the Ways to Wellbeing model and what additional information and resources would be useful to support people in their roles. The survey had the following aims:

* To provide a baseline of information about awareness and confidence of the wider workforce in mental health and wellbeing (including the Ways to Wellbeing model).
* To inform the development of a section to support the wider wellbeing workforce on West Space (referred to as a practitioner’s area in the survey).

The target audience was anyone working/volunteering in West Lothian who interacts with the general public regularly in their role i.e. the wider wellbeing workforce[[3]](#footnote-3).

1. **Survey Delivery**

An online secure survey ran from 31st August to 22nd of September 2023 and all responses were anonymous. It was shared widely across NHS Lothian, West Lothian Council, Education, the Third Sector, Community Sport/Leisure, Police and other relevant sectors. 551 responses were received in total. There is acknowledgement of the limitations of the survey. The target audience was very large and cannot be completely defined or captured in terms of size. It is also likely that respondents with more experience of mental health and wellbeing issues within their role, or personally, may have been more likely to complete the survey and therefore this would have resulted in a bias of results.

Therefore, this survey provides a snapshot to inform actions and plans but cannot be taken as completely representative of the West Lothian population.

1. **Survey Respondents**

West Lothian Council, Education/School, Health Care and the Third Sector made up over 80% of responses. Unfortunately, there were low responses from Private Business, Social Care and Unpaid Carers despite the survey being shared with contacts in all of these sectors.

The results showed around 30% of respondents work/volunteer with all ages and life stages.

Of the remaining 70%, approximately 40% of people work with children and young people and

60% work with adults aged 18+ at a range of stages. Therefore, there was good representation from people working across the life stages.

1. **Key findings from the survey**

There were many interesting and important findings from this survey which can be found in the full version of this report.

The following are noted as of particular interest:

* 1. **Respondent’s roles**

The results show that a large majority of respondents (94%) support people as a primary/secondary part of their role or come into contact with people struggling with their mental health and wellbeing. Only 6% of respondents did not class mental health and wellbeing as part of their role or do not come into contact with people who are struggling. Despite mental health not being part of their role, just over half of respondents reported that they still come into contact with people who are struggling with their wellbeing.

* 1. **Respondent’s frequency of contact**

Just over 40% of respondents reported that they come into contact with people who are struggling with their mental health and wellbeing every day. This rose to two thirds of respondents reporting they come into contact with people who are struggling with their mental health and wellbeing every week. This finding was reflected in responses from people working across the range of sectors.

* 1. **Respondent’s workplace wellbeing support**

There is scope for improvement in organisational wellbeing support with only 22% of respondents reporting they felt well supported by their organisation with their own mental health and wellbeing. Given that 80% of respondents are from the public/third sector this presents an opportunity to have an increased focus on more support for people’s health and wellbeing within an organisational setting.

* 1. **Opportunities for improvement in relation to mental health and wellbeing**

Opportunities for improvements could be themed into the following categories:

* Better partnership working across agencies and taking a whole system approach.
* More support for staff – stress at work/reduced staff/high workload/non-supportive culture/aggressive behaviour.
* More training opportunities and awareness of support.
* Addressing root causes of poor wellbeing (e.g. stress at work, cost of living).
* Need for senior buy-in and positive culture.
* The importance of physical activity and being outdoors.
  1. **What is beneficial for people’s wellbeing**

The results showed good general awareness across the board of what is beneficial for people’s wellbeing. However, less than 30% of respondents had heard of the ways to wellbeing model and only 15% of respondents had used the ways to wellbeing model to help people they support.

* 1. **Confidence in signposting**

In terms of the confidence in signposting to wellbeing opportunities, there was a range of responses and a big opportunity to improve and support confidence. Signposting to physical activity/sport, appreciating the moment and giving back to others showed the highest confidence levels. Financial security and support for people going through the menopause[[4]](#footnote-4) showed the least confidence.

Participants were also asked torate how confident they felt in signposting people for more information/support about mental health and wellbeing more generally. The results show a range of confidence levels in signposting to additional information/support. Only 31% of respondents reported feeling ‘confident’ or ‘very confident’ in signposting and 14% were not confident at all. There was a spread across all levels of confidence in each sector, highlighting a need across the board for support to increase confidence.

* 1. **Knowledge about mental health and wellbeing**

The results are somewhat encouraging, with 55% of respondents rating their basic knowledge of mental health and wellbeing good or excellent and only 7% rating their knowledge as poor or very poor. Despite this, 73% of respondents indicated they would like to learn more about mental health and wellbeing.

This may reflect a gap between people developing knowledge and feeling confident to put it into practice. Or it may be that peoples are looking for different knowledge to that which they already have.

* 1. **Support for the wider wellbeing workforce**

The survey asked questions to help understand how the workforce could be more supported and to inform the development of a practitioner’s section on West Space.

The following answers were most popular:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What type of information would you like to see on a new practitioner’s section on the website West Space? | What learning and support opportunities would be helpful in relation to mental health and wellbeing? |
| * Basic mental health awareness (43%) – *Practitioner’s section* * How to support good wellbeing (44%) – *6 Ways to Wellbeing* * Where to signpost people for more information (49%) – *West Space directory* * Community assets to support wellbeing in West Lothian (41%) – *6 Ways to Wellbeing* * Mental health and wellbeing pathways in West Lothian (46%) – *Practitioner’s section* * All of the above (68%) | * Information and awareness sessions (23%) * An online area containing relevant information/resources (32%) * An online directory of support services (36%) * An opportunity to hear about local services/supports (26%) * Free e-learning on mental health and wellbeing (26%) * All of the above (55%) |

In relation to the first question, for many of these categories the content is either already available or in development (indicated in italics).

* 1. **Awareness of West Space**

Respondents were asked if they were familiar with the website West Space[[5]](#footnote-5), which provides local mental health and wellbeing resources and information. Over two thirds of respondents did not have any awareness of West Space. A further 21% of respondents did have awareness of West Space but had not used it, with only around 10% of respondents overall reporting using the web site regularly or occasionally. Of those who do use West Space, 63% rated it as ‘useful’ or ‘very useful’ with another 23% rating it ‘somewhat useful’.

1. **Recommendations**

The following actions are recommendation as a result of the survey findings and will be taken forward by, or in partnership with, the Adult Mental Health Prevention & Early Intervention Group:

* Share the findings from this report widely with key sectors, including sector leads responsible for workplace wellbeing and training.
* Create an area on West Space to support the wider wellbeing workforce based on the findings from the survey and undertake user testing.
* Consider gathering further insights into the wider wellbeing workforce requirements to inform further developments of the area on West Space.
* Consider if any additional activity is required to support the wider wellbeing workforce with confidence in signposting.
* Undertake online awareness raising sessions to provide a walk-through of the new area on West Space when live.
* Develop a communications plan to increase awareness of West Space in the public and people working in West Lothian (additional resource may be needed to support this activity).

***Report prepared by:*** *Helen Hassall, Population Health Project Manager (West Lothian), NHS Lothian on behalf of the West Lothian Adult Mental Health Prevention & Early Intervention Group December 2023.*

1. This group is the West Lothian Adult Mental Health Prevention & Early Intervention Group. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. There is a well-recognised and evidenced based ‘[5 Ways to Wellbeing](http://samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/self-help-and-wellbeing/five-ways-to-better-mental-health)’ model, to which the group have added a sixth ‘way’ – financial wellbeing – to recognise the huge impact of financial security and cost of living on wellbeing. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The new Scottish Government Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy defines [the wider mental wellbeing workforce](https://www.gov.scot/publications/mental-health-wellbeing-strategy/pages/10/#:~:text=The%20wider%20mental%20wellbeing%20workforce%20includes%20wider%20public%2C%20third%2C%20and,significant%20role%20in%20promoting%20good). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The menopause was included as its impact on physical activity and mental wellbeing has been highlighted in research published by [SAMH](https://www.samh.org.uk/documents/Academic_Research_Summary_Report_Menopause_mental_wellbeing_and_physical_activity.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [West Space](http://www.westspace.org.uk) contains self-help materials, guides and resources and a directory of services based in West Lothian. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)