



Staff Wellbeing Charter



WORKING TOGETHER
FOR CHILDREN

Staff Wellbeing Charter



Staff Wellbeing Charter

We are very proud of our employees, and we believe by working for Ad Astra Academy Trust that employees thrive.

The Latin phrase 'Ad Astra' means 'to the stars'; our strapline "stars in the making" reflects an ambitious vision within each school community that every child and every staff member can be the best that they can be. We want everyone to achieve their best within Ad Astra.

We are a caring and supportive employer. We know our staff are our greatest asset in ensuring our children achieve the best outcomes; therefore, we ensure employees feel valued and supported as they develop their career with us. We invest heavily in professional development, ensuring our staff are not only well equipped to respond to the dynamic educational landscape, delivering innovative teaching and learning techniques to our children for maximum benefit, but that they are also given exciting opportunities to grow professionally.

We recognise that for individuals to achieve their best, the wellbeing of all Trust employees should be protected, promoted, and enhanced. Good wellbeing has many benefits to individuals and the wider Trust. Our staff wellbeing charter is a range of commitments that the Trust intends to deliver to all employees in support of the wellbeing and mental health of all working in the Trust.

"Employees are the Trust's greatest asset. As a Trust Board, we recognise that for individuals to achieve their best, the wellbeing of all Trust employees should be protected, promoted, and enhanced."

CHRIS SIMMONS, Chair of the Trust Board



"At Ad Astra Academy Trust, we recognise the importance of creating positive, safe, and inclusive working environments where individuals can thrive. The Trust have developed a wellbeing charter to demonstrate our commitment and dedication to support, improve, and enhance the wellbeing of all our employees through our policies and procedures."

ANDY BROWN OBE
CEO, Ad Astra Academy Trust

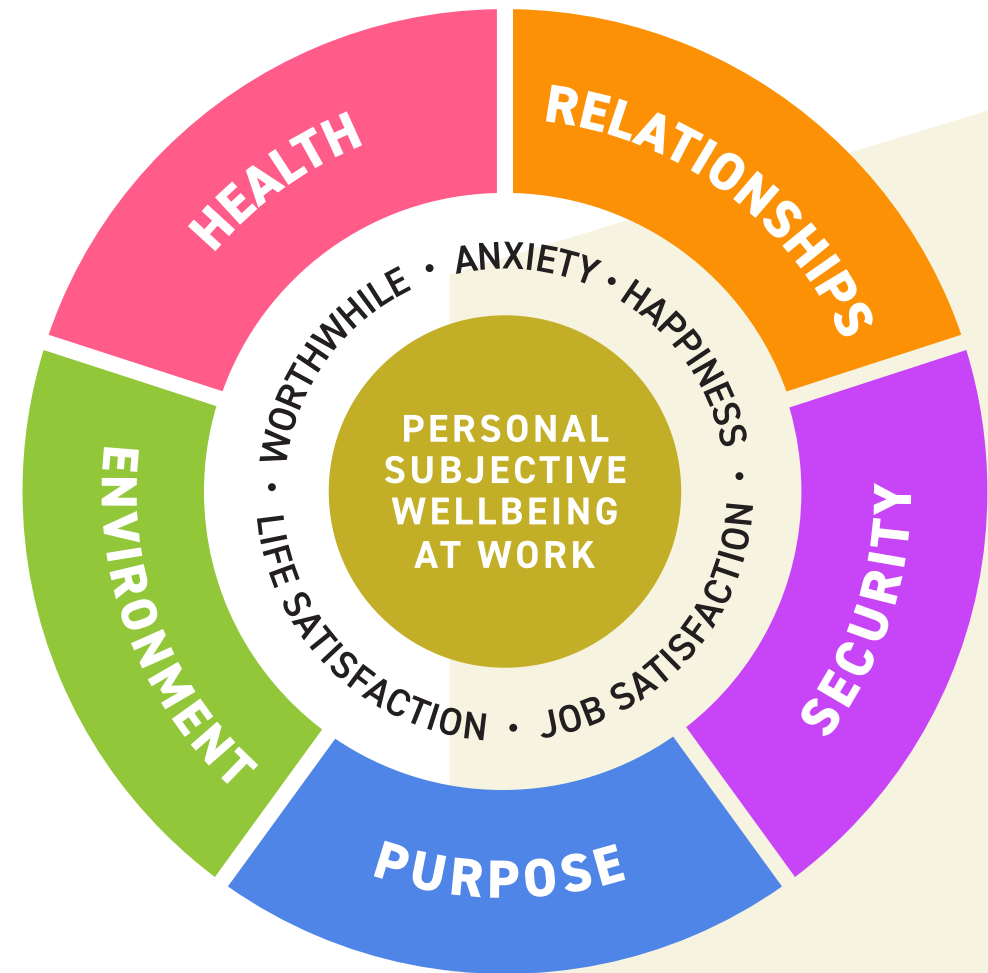
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WHAT IS WELLBEING?

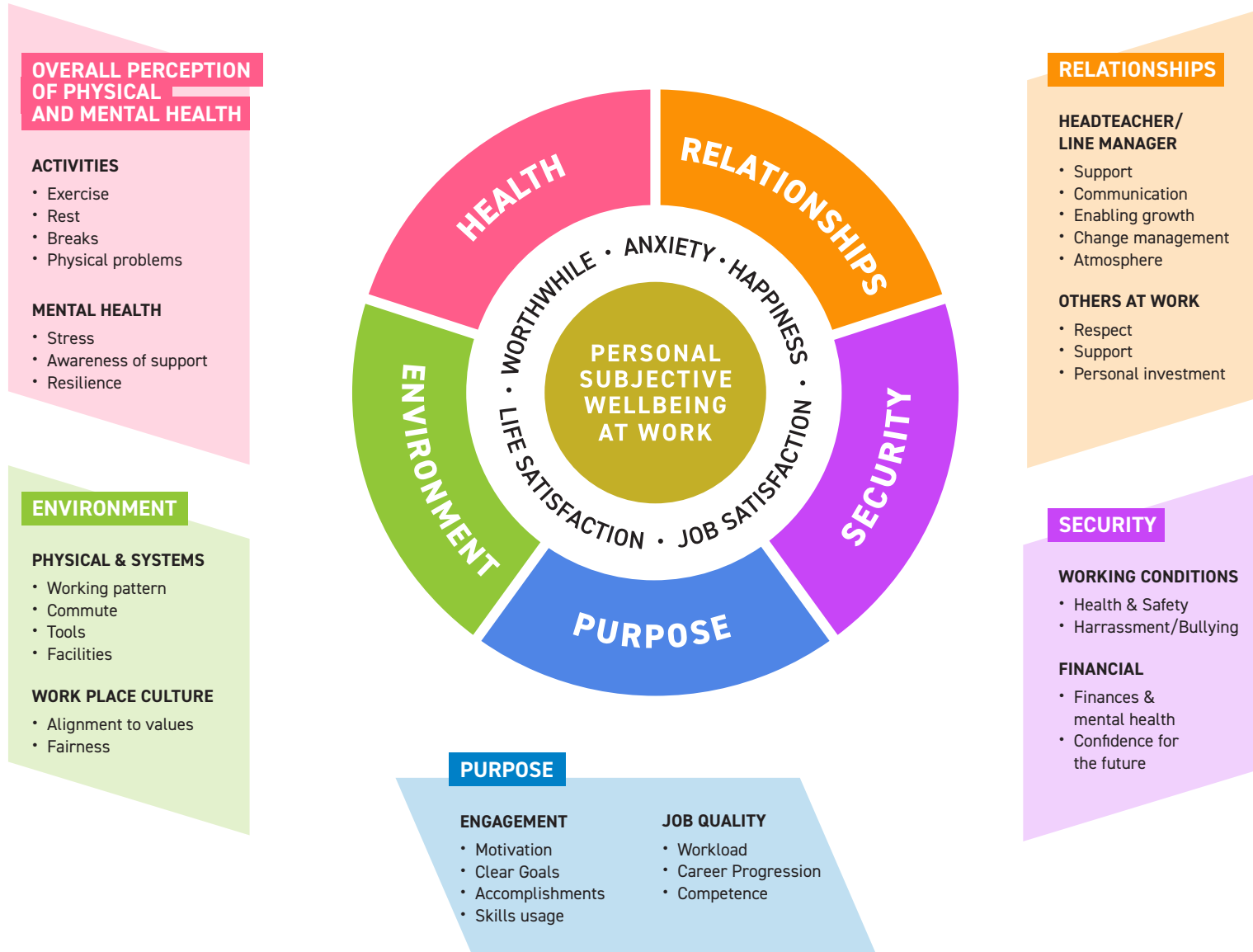
Wellbeing can be defined in many ways; it is defined by the DfE as “a state of complete physical and mental health that is characterised by high quality social relationships.” Wellbeing is a total state of health not limited to an individual's physical and/or mental health.

Wellbeing is about ‘how we are doing’ as individuals. Improving wellbeing should be something that everyone aims to do now and for the future.

Wellbeing encompasses many factors that can affect how individuals function within society and the experiences that individuals are subject to throughout their daily lives. Individuals wellbeing may be affected by many interrelated factors, meaning a holistic view on wellbeing is needed. There are many of these factors that we recognise as a Trust are not unique to education staff alone and are outside the influence of our schools or the Trust. There are, however, five key drivers of wellbeing in the workplace which may interlink and contribute to higher or lower staff wellbeing at work.



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"I value the school's equality and how the staff and senior leadership team support one another."

TEACHING ASSISTANT, Sunnyside

AD ASTRA STAFF

At Ad Astra, we do not see wellbeing as a tokenistic gesture, and we avoid wellbeing gimmicks that are often discussed on social media. However, it is extremely important that as an employee of the Trust, individuals feel supported with their health and wellbeing and are provided with practises and services that can have a positive impact on their wellbeing. Wellbeing should be interwoven into everything we do, with the understanding that happy employees perform better and live healthier lives. Ad Astra employees support each other and value teamwork in schools and across the whole Trust. We look forward to continuing to work with employees to ensure the Trust and its schools remain a fantastic place to work.

"I have found working within Ad Astra a positive experience, I feel that staff wellbeing is prioritised, and I feel supported by the senior leadership team at Ayresome. I value the team ethos throughout the Trust, and in school and feel I can always talk to someone if things are tough."

TEACHER, Ayresome

"Staff are supportive of one another, and the leadership team are caring and understanding. Staff receive appreciation for the work they do which is welcomed and feels personal."

TEACHER, Rosebrook

"Ad Astra promotes positive work relationships throughout the trust. I feel valued and supported within my team and I can comfortably discuss any health or wellbeing concerns as support pathways are clear."

BUSINESS SUPPORT OFFICER, Central

"I have worked At Rosebrook since the school was built. Since joining the Trust I have seen great improvement regarding the attitudes about wellbeing. I have always felt supported with any wellbeing issues I have had. The senior leadership team have an open-door policy and always check with us on how staff are feeling or if there is anything they can do. Regardless of your role, you are made to feel valued. I feel that comments are taken on board and there is a clear commitment to change things that don't work. are taken on board."

TEACHING ASSISTANT, Rosebrook

"I joined the Trust as a Teaching Assistant. I was really supported by the Headteacher and CEO to complete my teacher training. I feel it gave me a fantastic opportunity to be in paid employment whilst training."

TEACHER, Crooksbarne

"We are encouraged to share our ideas and express our feelings. The headteacher always makes time for me if I need work-related or personal support. Working at Crooksbarne is fun, at break times our staffroom is always busy and echoing with laughter."

PARENT AND PUPIL SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING, Crooksbarne

"The new employee induction meeting hosted by the CEO made me feel part of the team. I like the fact there are opportunities to move around the Trust, a very collaborative feel."

TEACHER, Ayresome

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STAFF WELLBEING CHARTER BENEFITS

At Ad Astra we believe that if you take care and look after your health and your wellbeing, it can lead to positive effects on both your personal life and professionally in the work that you do. When the health and wellbeing of an individual is good, it can bring a sense of purpose and a feeling of happiness, confidence and satisfaction within personal and work lives. All individuals should prioritise their health, to support their home and to enable effectiveness at work when thinking of their own wellbeing.

Our **Wellbeing Charter** demonstrates our commitment to the health and wellbeing of all Trust employees. We want our employees, who are our biggest assets, and our future employees to work in a culture that is supportive, in an environment where staff can feel cared for and valued.

We want to encourage open conversations around physical and mental health and wellbeing, with an aim to provide all staff with benefits, practises, and services that can positively impact their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

We want to give our employees support with mental, emotional, and social wellbeing by promoting the health and wellbeing practises and services we offer but also assist our employees experience personal achievement and fulfilment in their roles.

We aim to help and support employees by boosting morale, improving teamwork and collaboration and increase awareness around wellbeing topics.

We hope to create and sustain a positive working environment, improve employee engagement, and encourage employees to achieve a healthy work life balance along with offering access and appropriate support to anyone experiencing difficulties with their physical or mental health and wellbeing.

We also acknowledge that, although our wellbeing charter is a range of commitments that the Trust guarantees to deliver to all employees working in the Trust, there may be other initiatives that individual schools within the Trust may wish to do additionally in further support of employees wellbeing and mental health.

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1. Health
 2. Home
 3. Work...

If you don't take care of yourself, how do you take care of your home or the work that you do?

TRUST ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We are committed to ensuring staff wellbeing and their physical and mental health is at the heart of the decisions we make. We will encourage and support staff members to make good and positive choices to support their own wellbeing, along with a commitment to develop a positive culture around wellbeing and a long term strategy to assist in improving employee wellbeing by focusing on the following areas:

- **GOOD COLLABORATION**

Ad Astra Academy Trust are a team. We will encourage active networking across our schools within the Trust, sharing good practices, and resources, actively supporting one another to benefit the whole Trust and all of its employees.

- **ENCOURAGE COLLEAGUE SUPPORT**

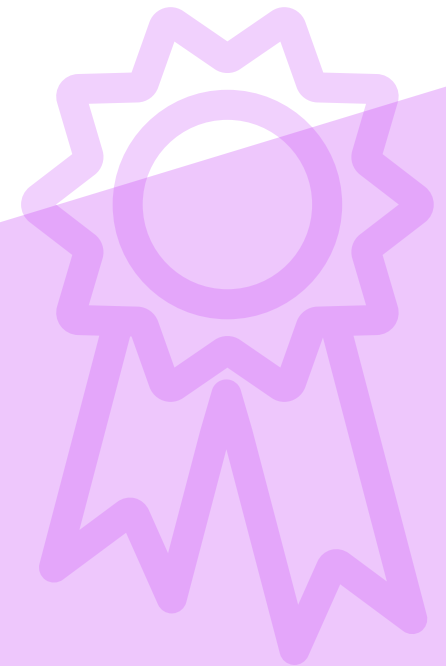
We would like to see our staffrooms filled with friendship, and laughter. A place where colleagues can offer support to one another, encouraging a caring and respectful culture.

- **PROMOTING EMPLOYEE VOICE**

We want to proactively engage with all key stakeholders, including our trade union colleagues. Striving to improve ways in which employee voice is heard and factored in to decisions made across the Trust.

- **CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION**

All Trust colleagues should communicate effectively. We will provide clear guidance to all colleagues, including remote workers, around out of school/office working and communication, and when it is reasonable to expect this and when it is not. This is not to prevent any employee from accessing emails outside of work hours if that is a personal choice to do so. Trust colleagues are encouraged to talk face to face, over the telephone or via platforms such as Microsoft teams, as well as email communication.



Our Promise

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- **SUPPORT WITH LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Staff will be encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities that do not negatively impact their workload or that of their colleagues. Appraisal and performance processes are to take place for all employees, designed to celebrate employees achievements and reflect on all aspects of their performance. This process can also assist employees with developing their skills and knowledge and provide support and guidance should employees wish to progress their careers.

- **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

Headteachers/line managers will be provided with the tools, training and resources needed to support employees with their wellbeing, with clear routes of escalation in place if further support is required. We aim to provide leaders with relevant training on all Trust policies and procedures. Leaders should be visible and operate an open door policy where possible.

- **PROMOTING DIVERSITY**

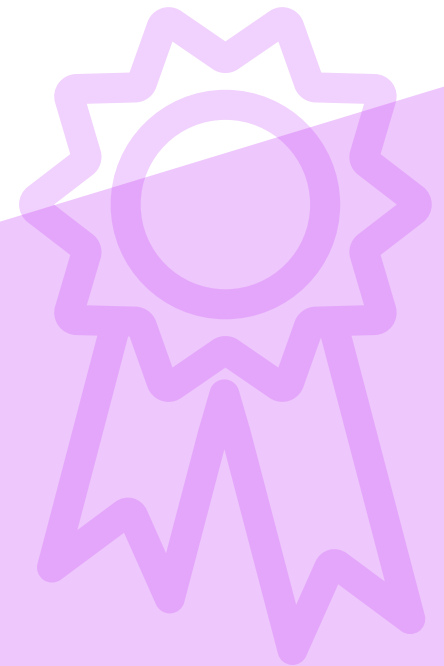
We will promote diversity and equality of opportunities, with the aim of eliminating discrimination. We will provide staff opportunities to undergo equality, diversity and inclusion training should this be required for their own development or understanding.

- **PROMOTING A GOOD BEHAVIOUR CULTURE**

Ensure that all Trust employees and pupils share an understanding of what good behaviour looks like, how it is encouraged and rewarded. We will work with all colleagues to maintain and implement the Trust's Staff Behaviour Policy and have respectful approaches to behaviour in the workplace.

- **REDUCE UNNECESSARY WORKLOAD**

We will work further on practises already in place to reduce workloads such as encouraging utilisation of administration support, planning meetings, curriculum maps and employees proactively gaining the views and ideas of colleagues on how to reduce workload. Proactively trying to reduce unnecessary workload by making use of any tools available such as GOV.UK School workload reduction kit/DfE Workload surveys. Avoiding tick box cultures, not doing anything above statutory requirements if it has no impact or does not make a difference.



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- **WORK LIFE BALANCE AND FAMILY FRIENDLY APPROACH**

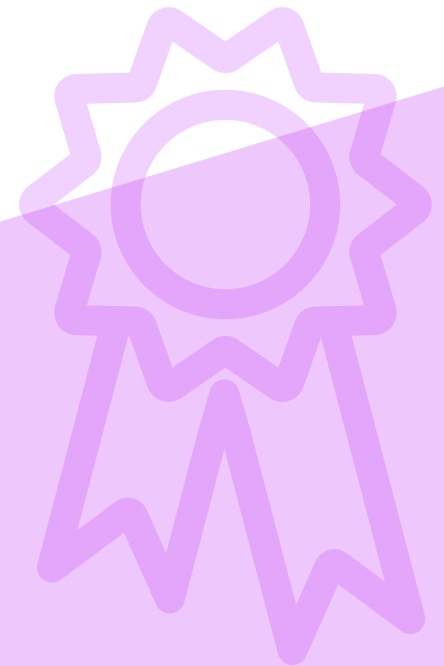
We encourage a culture where employees do not remain at work for excessively long hours and believe that all individuals should have a positive work life balance. We want to promote an environment that supports and encourages employees to strike a healthy balance between their work and personal life. Our special leave policy and family friendly approach means when it is operationally viable we may be able to allow employees time for family events or occasions to support this balance further. Carefully considering work life balance solutions such as flexible working, can assist employees in achieving a good work life balance.

- **GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT TO ENABLE STAFF TO LOOK AFTER THEIR OWN MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

We will encourage all employees to understand how to access appropriate support and guidance for the different factors that may affect their health and wellbeing and aim to empower staff to take ownership of their own health and wellbeing and that of their colleagues. We aim to appoint a mental health first aider and a wellbeing champion within each school across the Trust for all employees to have a point of contact should they be experiencing a mental health or wellbeing issue. Focus groups and/or workshops will take place periodically to raise awareness and support for employees to cover topics such as menopause, and information, guidance and support given during recognised national awareness event days and weeks.

- **REWARD AND RECOGNITION**

Good work should be recognised, with employees and collective teams thanked for their contributions and hard work. We want to promote a culture of appreciation where employees feel valued, and achievements are celebrated. The Trust want to acknowledge staff who achieve service milestones to thank individuals for their long term dedication.

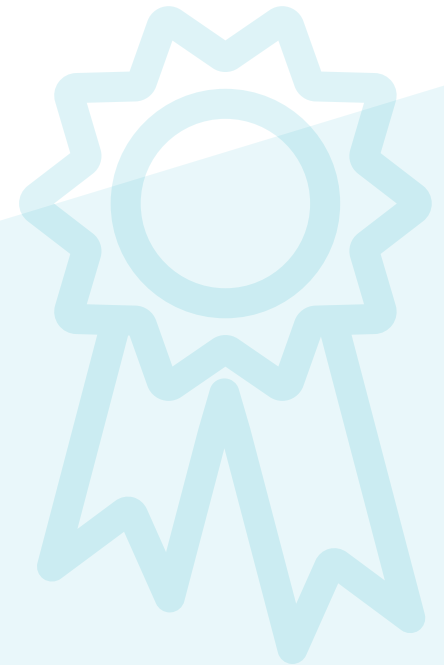


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MONITORING & EVALUATING WELLBEING...

Although wellbeing is subjective, it can be measured. The Trust can support, monitor, and evaluate employee wellbeing in a number of ways, which include:

- Periodical staff wellbeing surveys.
- Employee feedback.
- Open door policies, to encourage employees to speak directly to senior leadership teams or central team staff.
- Monitoring employee absence.
- Monitoring employee turnover.
- Job role evaluation.
- Gender pay gap reporting.
- Provision of a range of policies with regards to employee wellbeing including but not limited to flexible working, absence management and grievance processes.
- Cross-trust working groups.
- Topical focus group feedback sessions.
- School visits from central team staff.



WELLBEING RESOURCE LINKS

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

- **Mental Health North East for Tees, Esk, and Wear Valley NHS Trust area:** Crisis Resolution and Intensive Home Treatment team - Urgent Mental Health Care - 0800 0516 171 (24hrs, 7 days a week) Crisis support (national and local) (mhne.org.uk)
- **Samaritans** - 116 123 (Free phone) Samaritans | Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy | Here to listen
- **Anxious Minds** - 0191 262 0305 North East Mental Health Support - Anxious Minds
- **Shout** - Free, 24/7 confidential mental health text support in the UK. Text 'shout' to 85258 Shout - UK's 24/7 Crisis Text Service for Mental Health Support | Shout 85258 (giveusashout.org)
- **Rethink Mental Illness (National Advice and Information Service)** - 0808 801 0525 Looking for advice about mental illness? We can help. (rethink.org)

PHYSICAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Visit your GP - You can find the full address and telephone number of your GP practise by visiting:
<http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/GP/LocationSearch/4>

NHS - 111

Get help for your symptoms - NHS 111

Call 999 for emergency support or find your nearest Accident and Emergency department (A&E) by visiting <https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/other-services/Accident%20and%20emergency%20services/LocationSearch/428>

