

## **Creating a sense of belonging for new staff**

The need to create a sense of belonging for new staff grew out of some work that the Workforce team completed during the Pandemic. During that time every member of staff was contacted on a daily basis by a member of the workforce team to check how they were.

Laura Wolstenholme our Head of People and Communication began looking at Persona's recruitment and probation policy and made some changes:

One change was that from the point that a job offer is made, the new employee is to receive a weekly phone call whilst checks are being carried out, this contact is just to see how they are, if they have any questions, make sure that they know where they are going on their first day, who they will be meeting, if they need to bring anything with them etc.

I am new in post and can verify that this happened for me.

The Workforce team would say that they know that this process isn't fully embedded across the company yet but they are working on it. I spoke to one of the coordinators in our Supported Living Service and asked her what she does when a new member of staff is appointed and she gave me the following response:

- "When Tracey started I spoke to her regularly whilst her DBS and references were being completed, I emailed her copies of the rota, I sent her a plan for her induction, who she would be supporting, where she was to meet the team member she would be working with and their name. I met her after she had completed her 2<sup>nd</sup> shift and we then met formally every 4 weeks during her probation to complete her probation plan together, this looked at how she was doing with work, with her training, policies etc and if any additional training was needed. As well as the formal process I would also ring her informally when she was on rota and check in."

I asked the Coordinator about shadowing and how that works, she answered that each new staff member is treated individually so whilst it is usual for shadowing to last for about 2 weeks this is flexible and can be extended if a new team member needs more time.

## **Induction Training**

As well as service and / or customer specific training which will happen in the workplace and some online training which is specific to the role that the new member of staff has been employed for, there is also the corporate induction.

The corporate induction is a face to face group session and lasts between 1-5 days depending on your role in the company and what is required.

Everyone completes day 1 which is an introduction to the company, the company values, and an introduction to the Learning Hub and the Wellbeing Hub. Kat Sowden our Managing Director also attends for lunch where she gets to know a bit about the new starters, talks a bit more about the company and answers any questions.

The group will include all new starters so can be mixed, for example when I completed day 1, the group included myself as Recruitment and Development Manager, A Registered Manager for our Day Services and 2 Support Workers, I feel that this also supports the feeling of a sense of belonging as you are directly interacting with others who on a day to day basis you might not come into regular contact with but ensures that you are aware of the bigger team that you are part of.

Within the week there is also 1 day Moving and Handling training and 1 day First Aid Training and the new staff will be joined by other current Persona employees who require a refresher, again supporting that feeling of belonging and allowing interaction with individuals who work in different teams to themselves.

The final 2 days look at Care Certificate content

Following the corporate Induction Sue Partington, our Workforce Development Officer who manages and facilitates the corporate induction so has already built a relationship with each new member of staff, keeps in contact with them, she will speak to them at least after month 1 and month 3, but quite often monthly until the end of their probation, checking in to make sure that they are ok, Sue will also talk to the individuals managers about any outstanding training the new starter has and also to ask if the manager needs any help with anything. Sue will stay involved for longer if needed and/or change what she does.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

I spoke to Fiona Parmanand our Lead Communications Officer who developed our Wellbeing Hub, I have attached 2 posters that give more information about what can be found on the Wellbeing Hub, specifically what is on it and where.

As well as being informative, really useful for signposting and offering some great advice it also hopefully shows the whole staff team that the company cares about them

The Wellbeing Hub is available for all staff, staff are introduced to it at the Corporate Induction with monthly updates being circulated by email and text to everyone.

The company recognises that not all staff access the Hub and are continually looking for ways to raise greater awareness and engagement amongst the staff, including attending and presenting at Annual Staff Workshops

The Hub is split into 5 sections (see Poster 1) and all sections tie into the NHS Five Ways to Wellbeing – Connect, Be Active, Keep Learning, Take Notice, Give to Others.

There is so much on the Hub but just to give you a taster of a few things:

### **Wellness Action Plans**

Often it's very small things that can make you feel supported and make a difference to how well you cope with life. Making a note of the things that work for you can help you get a handle on your own mental health and if you share it with your family, friends or manager, they can help too.

A Wellness Action Plan (WAP) is a practical way for anyone to support their mental health, whether it's good or not so great right now.

Filling in a WAP can help you untangle how you think and feel when you aren't at your best and think of ways to ask for help. This knowledge is helpful for you in your home life as well as at work, and WAPs are now being included as part of our induction process for new staff

### **PAM Assist**

It is a free, confidential service you can refer yourself to, online or freephone.

It can help you deal with personal crises, family crises, illness or traumatic events, either at work or in your own life.

You can get instant support from a qualified counsellor 24/7 and 365 days of the year. You can access and arrange counselling, relationship counselling and CBT sessions with a qualified professional.

You can also access online resources immediately in all of these areas when you create a private account.

### **Weekly Yoga sessions**

These FREE half hour sessions run every Wednesday at 1.30pm on Microsoft Teams.

### ***Persona pays for the sessions which are free to every staff member***

You don't need any special clothing or equipment and the sessions are for all abilities. They will focus on things like breathing, stretching and relaxation and are aimed at helping you to feel refreshed and to provide you with techniques you can use in your everyday life.

### **Sweaty Bootcamp**

Sweaty Bootcamp is a women's only fitness class which is a community group, opened up to Persona staff, that allows you to build up your fitness gradually and safely in a fun and effective way!

We use different training methods and games to get a varied session in whilst having fun with the girls! Improve cardio fitness, muscle strength and core strength, make friends and feel fit and funky in this non-judgmental environment.

Sweaty Bootcamp is on at The Elms Community Centre every Tuesday at 6.30pm, as part of our Social Spaces offer.

### **Menopause Café**

The Persona Menopause Cafe meets at 2pm on the second Wednesday of the month - it is managed and facilitated by Persona staff members

If you can't make it to the cafe, you can send your question We'll ask it anonymously and add any answers we get to the monthly update below.

If you need support in between cafes in confidence, contact Debbie Timmins or Mo Arthur, our Menopause Wellbeing Champions.

### **Other Champions**

As well as Menopause Wellbeing Champions there are also Wellbeing Champions who are trained as Mental Health First Aiders and also some who offer help navigating the hub.

### **Staff Networks**

There are so many benefits to networking - you can #Connect #KeepLearning #BeActive #TakeNotice and #GiveToOthers - that's all five of the NHS's ways to wellbeing!

Whether you want to share your knowledge or get support; make things happen or be there for others, there may be more Persona Staff Networks available to you than you realise:

- Wellbeing Wednesdays
- Champions Network
- Staff Your Voice
- Cultural Calendar
- High Five
- All opportunities for Wellbeing

### **Our Wellbeing Stories**

Inspirational stories from Persona Staff discussing and explaining how they keep themselves well and includes their tips for wellbeing

### **Give to Others**

Have you got a volunteering, fundraising or donation opportunity to share with your Persona colleagues?

### **And there is More!**

As well as the Wellbeing Hub there are other activities and opportunities for staff to engage with each other and be involved in the Company

### **Chat with Kat (Managing Director)**

Kat says " In an organisation that operates 24/7, 365 days a year it can be really challenging to communicate well with all staff.

We have lots of ways to get messages through including the intranet, newsletter, via managers, in team meetings, and social media to name a few, but nothing beats hearing it from the horse's mouth (so to speak!!).

During Covid it became even harder to stay connected as we avoided senior managers coming into services unless it was essential, in order to protect staff and customers from the increased risk of coronavirus. For these reasons I wanted to try a new approach which we have imaginatively called 'Chat with Kat'.

It does exactly what it says on the tin. It's an opportunity for any member of staff to come and talk to me in a virtual format. That means you can do it from work or home via a phone, laptop or tablet. I'll pick a couple of topics that I will update everyone on, but the bulk of the session is your opportunity to ask me anything you like. As I always say, no question is a silly question. If you want we can keep your question anonymised and you can also raise it via one of our [Staff Your Voice reps](#) if that feels more comfortable for you."

### **Art of Brilliance**

A 1 day interactive and thought provoking workshop for all staff aimed at supporting you to be a more positive, motivated and brilliant person. In short, we will remind you how to be your best self.

### **Annual Persona Awards**

Individual staff members nominated and voted for by their peers

### **High 5's**

High 5 is provided by a company called 'Wrkit' – our virtual way to say thank you and recognise each other when someone has done something to help out, go the extra mile and/or to live our values.

### **Final Word**

At Persona our strap line is "We're all about you" and that very much means the staff team as well as the people we support.

We believe that building relationships and ensuring that all staff feel that they belong from day 1 is essential, as already mentioned we do provide and offer a lot of support, some of these concepts and ideas are still quite new and we will continue to work to fully embed these processes throughout the organisation.

Workforce Statistics between Jan 2022 – Jan 2023 (These figures exclude casual positions)

Turnover - 15.6%

Retention – 91.5%

Vacancy Rate – 5.5%

Training Compliance – 91%

Retention of new starters last 12 months – 92%