



Chronic Illness Case Study from CVS

Here is a case study from CVS, outlining how they support their veterinary nurses and all their employees.

CVS proudly employ veterinary nurses across many divisions within their company. Examples of the positions held include first opinion and referral level clinical practice nurses, health and safety advisors, practice directors and regional directors, to name just a few.

As CVS employ nurses across such a diverse range of positions, ensuring that they have suitable support available to their nurses and all their colleagues, whatever role they hold within the company, remains as one of their highest priorities.

With this in mind, whilst they do not have any nurse specific tools, they offer the following support to all of their colleagues;

- **Wellbeing Committee and Working Groups** - CVS have an established wellbeing committee and three proactive working groups who feed back to the committee;
 1. **Group 1 - Community/Social** – The overall aim is to develop, promote and deliver group/team wellbeing initiatives/activities to increase engagement, wellbeing and a sense of community
 2. **Group 2 – Self/Individual** – The overall aim is to develop, deliver and promote self-care training and resources to increase wellbeing through self-leadership and individual responsibility
 3. **Group 3 – Leadership/Management** – The overall aim is to develop, support and encourage all leaders to best support the wellbeing of their teams
- **Wellbeing Champion/First Aider for Mental Health** - CVS has trained a network of over 200 Wellbeing Champions/First Aiders for Mental Health who can be identified by local posters and communications, as well as via the Health and Wellbeing pages of the intranet (Pulse). These colleagues are trained to be able to provide initial support to a colleague in distress and spend time supporting wellbeing initiatives.

As an example of the support and resources created by the wellbeing working groups, please see their recently launched [Wellbeing Calendar](#).

- **Going Home Checklist** – This was launched in May 2020 to encourage positive reflection, gratitude and switching off at the end of a working day. Moving through the simple steps of the checklist can help bring awareness to our thoughts and feelings about the positive

aspects of our day, whilst treating ourselves and others with kindness. [You will find an example of their Going Home Checklist here.](#)

- **Check in conversations / 1:1's** – CVS have moved away from the more traditional, formal appraisal model towards check-in conversations that are colleague centred, meaningful and regular. Regular check-ins will support a positive culture of wellbeing and engagement, and are an essential part of their key strategic pillar: to be a great place to work and have a career. [You will find an example of their Check-In Poster here.](#)
- **HR Support** - CVS has a team of experienced HR professionals on hand to support and guide employees and managers on dealing with a wealth of issues including Health and Wellbeing. The team is based both at support office in Diss and out in the field working remotely to support all areas of the business. Each hub has a dedicated team of HR Business Partners. Their HR professionals work closely with local leaders to map out bespoke support for the colleague requiring assistance alongside providing training to those leaders to better support their teams.
- **Wellness Action Plan** – The Wellbeing Action Plans are a personalised, practical tool we can all use, whether we have a mental health problem or not, to help identify what keeps us well at work, what causes us to become unwell, and how to address a mental health problem at work should you be experiencing one. It also opens up a dialogue with your manager or supervisor, in order for them to better understand your needs and experiences and ultimately better. ([guide-to-waps-employees-english_interactive-op.pdf \(mind.org.uk\)](#))
- **Employee Assistance Programme** - CVS gives all colleagues access to a free, 24 hours EAP service provided by an external specialist provider. Calls to the service are confidential. The service supports both employees and managers with various issues including health and wellbeing, and provides colleagues with telephone access to a trained counsellor.
- **Specialist Occupational Health provider** - Colleagues referred to this service are assessed by a doctor or nurse specialising in Occupational Health. Following a referral, the appropriate medical professional will provide bespoke advice to management on work-related matters, such as return to work and reasonable adjustments.

[You will find a copy of CVS' Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy here.](#)

Having access to this abundance of resource enables CVS to tailor their support on an individual case by case basis. They endeavour to continue to promote positive change in the health and wellbeing of their colleagues and strive to be the company that most want to work for.

Many thanks to CVS for sharing their support structure and documents with us.

