

Our Wellbeing Pledge



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In the summer of 2019, Friends of the Elderly ran workshops with colleagues working in the Charity's services to find out how we might better support them to improve wellbeing in the workplace. We listened to your feedback and suggestions, from which our Wellbeing Pledge has been created, outlining our ethos and future plans for workplace wellbeing.

Our vision at Friends of the Elderly is to "aspire to a society where all older people have the opportunity to live fulfilled lives", and our mission is to do this by "delivering services personalised to individual needs". For us to achieve this, we rely heavily on the experience, skills and talents of our employees and volunteers, therefore they also need our support and respect.

Our values were founded on suggestions from colleagues who told us what was most important to them while working with us:

- Promote **wellbeing**
- Strive for **excellence**
- Treat people with **respect**
- Keep everyone **safe**

These values not only underpin the care and support we provide to people who use our services and activities, but also the way we strive to treat each other. This is our Wellbeing Pledge - our commitment as employers to uphold these values. Promoting the wellbeing of colleagues is one of our top priorities, and in a changing and challenging environment, keeping everyone safe and respecting each other's needs encompasses physical as well as emotional, mental and occupational health.

Through this Pledge, we hope to create a respectful and safe environment, and to share experiences and learn from each other by talking openly.

We have based this pledge on the **VIPS Framework** developed by the Association for Dementia Studies, led by Professor Dawn Brooker at the University of Worcester, which promotes person-centred care. We believe that the ethos of care and support we provide to people who use our services should be mirrored in how we treat our employees and support their wellbeing.

VIPS Framework

- V** A values base that asserts the absolute of all human lives regardless of age or cognitive ability
- I** An individualised approach, recognising uniqueness
- P** Understanding the world from the perspective of the service user
- S** Providing a social environment that supports psychological needs

When these elements are brought together, they define a powerful approach to support personhood by valuing everybody.

Valuing everybody – creating a culture where everyone is valued and feels safe and supported means we must treat our own care and support teams and colleagues in the same way that we treat our service users. We aim to **value** our colleagues, respect them as **individuals**, understand their **perspectives**, and strive to provide a **socially supported** environment, ultimately to improve workplace wellbeing.

To do this we must be inclusive and diverse in our approach. We are committed to promoting equal opportunities and treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Our objective is to become an employer of choice. We must therefore improve, develop and learn to ensure we are inclusive and continue to promote cultural awareness.

With the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement and the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had on our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) colleagues, this is more important now than ever.

We are committed to sustained action, visible leadership, and a willingness to change in order to establish a working environment and culture that attracts and retains the people who best champion our vision, mission and values.

Tom Kitwood (1937-1998) was a social psychologist who identified several fundamental psychological and social human needs which must be met for us all, in order to maintain a good sense of wellbeing. He famously made a 'flower' of these needs, which we use today as part of our VIP framework training for all colleagues. They are very familiar with its importance. It is therefore a great model to adapt and use in our wellbeing pledge to colleagues.

In adopting the Kitwood flower, we pledge to all our colleagues to be committed to you:

1. **identity**
2. **occupation**
3. **inclusion**
4. **attachment**
5. **comfort**

This has led us to create a refreshed wellbeing package that aims to encompass staff development opportunities and recognition, supporting mental health at work and focusing on inclusion and diversity, and what is most important to each of our employees.



What does this pledge mean for you?

1. We are committed to your identity

We are committed to treating everyone with respect and supporting their specific needs, by being an understanding and flexible organisation. We endeavour to provide individual training and opportunities for personal, vocational, and professional development, reflecting people's individual interests and skills as well as celebrating their achievements.

You asked for more training and wellbeing workshops, so we will provide:

- Wellbeing courses and workshops tailored to you, on mindfulness, resilience, and motivation
- A new programme of support for our leaders and managers, that will embed a culture of wellbeing within everything we do
- More personal development opportunities will be available, in varied routes based on your interests.

2. We are committed to your occupation

We want to ensure that you are supported in your work, providing you with the right tools and helping you feel valued every step of the way. Recognising good practice and rewarding people when they go above and beyond in their roles is important for all.

You asked for more praise and recognition of what you do, so we will provide:

- Recognition awards based on teamwork as well as individual effort
- Qualifications and specific development routes for staff

3. We are committed to your inclusion

Communicating openly and inclusively with all colleagues and providing a space for everyone to share good practice is key to people being happy and fulfilled at work. We will strive to be inclusive and diverse in the ways we work and consult with all during important steps for our organisation. We will implement new and innovative ways to stay in touch and work together, but also enjoy our work together. Facebook's Workplace will provide a safe, internal shared space for everyone to connect through, and new virtual learning equipment will enable everyone to connect in an instant.

You asked for visits from different teams and improved communication, so we will provide:

- 'Workplace' access for all staff members to share best practice and learn from each other
- Virtual learning technology for daily use
- Updated meetings, two-way communication and connecting with other charity services frequently

4. We are committed to your attachment

Work is important, but wellbeing is about finding a work-life balance, so Friends of the Elderly is committed to increasing its work-based benefits package to ensure that everyone is able to make the most of time with friends and families. We aim to become an employer of choice and achieving better outcomes for all by recognising and supporting everyone's interests and hobbies.

You asked for more benefits and financial and personal support, so we will provide:

- Enhanced work perks to make life easier and more affordable
- Team building sessions and resources to enjoy time with your colleagues
- Bite-size wellbeing sessions on mindfulness and personal and professional resilience

5. We are committed to your comfort

Caring for others is so important as well as rewarding; however, it can also be very challenging and put a strain on your mental health and wellbeing. Therefore our top priority is ensuring that you feel safe in your role, and your mental and physical wellbeing is looked after. We will provide support systems to ensure that no one goes unnoticed if they are struggling, as well as training more colleagues to provide psychological and mental health first aid, so that we have the tools to support each other.

You asked for support for carers who have medical needs or caring requirements, so we will provide:

- Mental Health First Aider course opportunities
- A virtual wellbeing suggestion box for continued review
- Newsletters/ resource packs to include guidance on the latest wellbeing initiatives



**And finally, everybody needs to be loved and to love someone;
it is at the centre of the Kitwood Flower.**

These are extraordinary times, the likes of which none of us have ever faced before. They are scary and very present in our workplaces. Being loved and accepted is part of our need for survival, from when we were born. Love can range from loving a person, an activity or a favourite food, to loving a god and feeling self-love. We cannot manufacture love, but we can support all our colleagues by laying the foundations to meet their needs.

So, this pledge is just the first step in our wellbeing journey as an organisation. These are our commitments to you as a valued staff member, but we will share communications on specific programmes and future initiatives that you can get involved in.

Equally, for this Wellbeing Pledge to work, it has to be about what would make you happier and more fulfilled at work - so if you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact the Learning & Development team, part of Human Resources, and we can talk about it and make it happen wherever we can.

You can contact the team by emailing: wellbeing@fote.org.uk





Friends of the Elderly Group

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The Friends of the Elderly Group includes Friends of the Elderly, registered charity number 226064, and its subsidiaries Triangle Community Services, registered charity number 1016437, and the Retired Nurses National Home, registered charity number 1090202. From 1 April 2019, the charities came together under one name.

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